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The Spectres of Biography: Archive as Artwork

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The dead should not be permitted to be so much stronger than the living.
We must learn to forget the past, to live our own lives in our own time.

Marcel Duchamp, 1915.

Declaration

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

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Matthew Duke Partridge

_____ day of _____ 2014

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Abstract

In an attempt to understand the multiple lives of an object - specifically a death inquest register from the year 1976 - this dissertation examines five moments in the objects life (referred to as the Ledger) that invest it with ‘capital’. They are;

- The Cillié Commission of Inquiry.
- Sam Nzima’s photograph of Hector Pieterson.
- The destruction of apartheid documents in the early 1990’s.
- Kendell Geers’ appropriation of the Ledger.
- Museum Africa’s purchase of the Ledger.

By applying a biographical methodology to this object, this dissertation examines how the shifts in the multiple lives of the Ledger address the different roles that the archive plays in the construction of memory in South Africa.

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Introduction

1. A List of Names

The object of focus in this dissertation is a Ledger from the year 1976 which inside documents inquest details into unnatural deaths. The document is a brown cotton bound ledger measuring 420mm x 300mm x 59mm. On its cover, written in thick black marker is the date: 1976. Beneath this, embossed, reads *Republiek van Suid-Afrika*, with the English translation below (see fig. 1 overleaf)

Three quarters down the front cover there is a disposal slip or '*Beskikkingstrokie*' that has been pasted to the cover, which describes the ledger as a '*Doodsondersoeke Register*' (death inquest register). The slip details, in the first column, the period that the document covers (from the 2nd of January, 1976 to the 31st of December of the same year). In the next column, headed 'Directions as to Disposal' is the code 'D 10' with another date - 31/12/1986 - suggesting that 10 years after the twelve month period that the document chronicles it was to be destroyed. The inside cover features a stamp belonging to the Inspector from the Department of Justice in Pretoria that is dated 12/4/1977.

So far it is possible to see that the document bears an accumulation of marks stamps, some official, some added after its tenure. Inside the Ledger, the pages are delineated by several columns, spanning across a double page.

- On the first page, the first column heading is 'Serial Number'
- 'Date of P.M. Report [post-mortem] Received'.
- 'Name of Deceased' (surname first), with four narrower columns describing the bureaucratic processes pertaining to each inquest;
- 'Post-Mortem Number',
- 'Date of Death',
- 'Date of Police Docket Received',
- 'Date of File to Typists'.

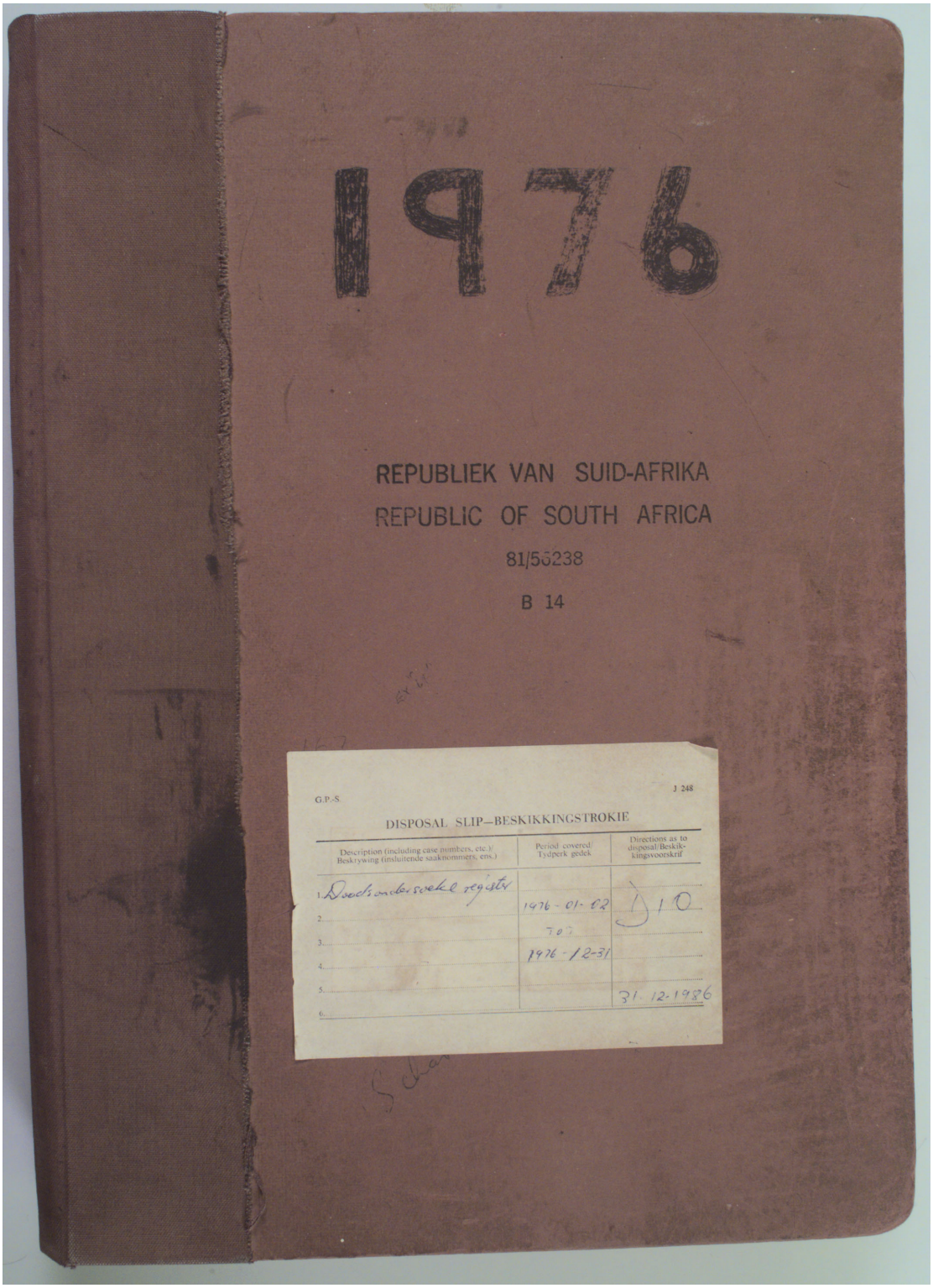


Figure 1. *Doodsondersoeke Register*, Republiek van Suid-Afrika, 1976.

Onto the next page the columns continue:

- ‘Date File Pending’,
- ‘Date Case Set Down or Remand’,
- ‘Date Record to A.G . [Attorney-General]’,
- ‘Date Record From A.G’,
- ‘A.G. Conf No’,
- ‘Date BMD in BI 15’,

and then a wider column for Criminal Cases featuring three sub-sections;

- ‘Court’,
- ‘Date’ and
- ‘Case Number’. [These are the criminal cases that the deceased person was believed to have been involved in and connected to.]

Arranged in alphabetical order, the names in each letter run chronologically, according to the date of when the post-mortem report was received. (see fig. 2 overleaf). Not all the pages are full, with blank pages after the records of a particular letter come to an end. Significantly, the letter U is the most used section of the document with many of the names of the deceased simply reading ‘Unknown’. Annotations added later refer these unknown cases to another serial number elsewhere in the ledger, presumably directing one to the identity of the ‘Unknown’ person, when a possible connection is discovered. In many instances however, there are no referring marks, leaving the case absent of any identity or any name. The document is complete with no pages missing.

2. Biography: Person and Thing

Biography, at its simplest level, is an account of someone’s life written by somebody else. Specific usually to human subjects, biographies relate accounts of their experiences and developments through the telling of life stories. More than just a simple accumulation of basic facts, a biography provides an opportunity for detailed analysis by examining these experiences and contextualising them against historical

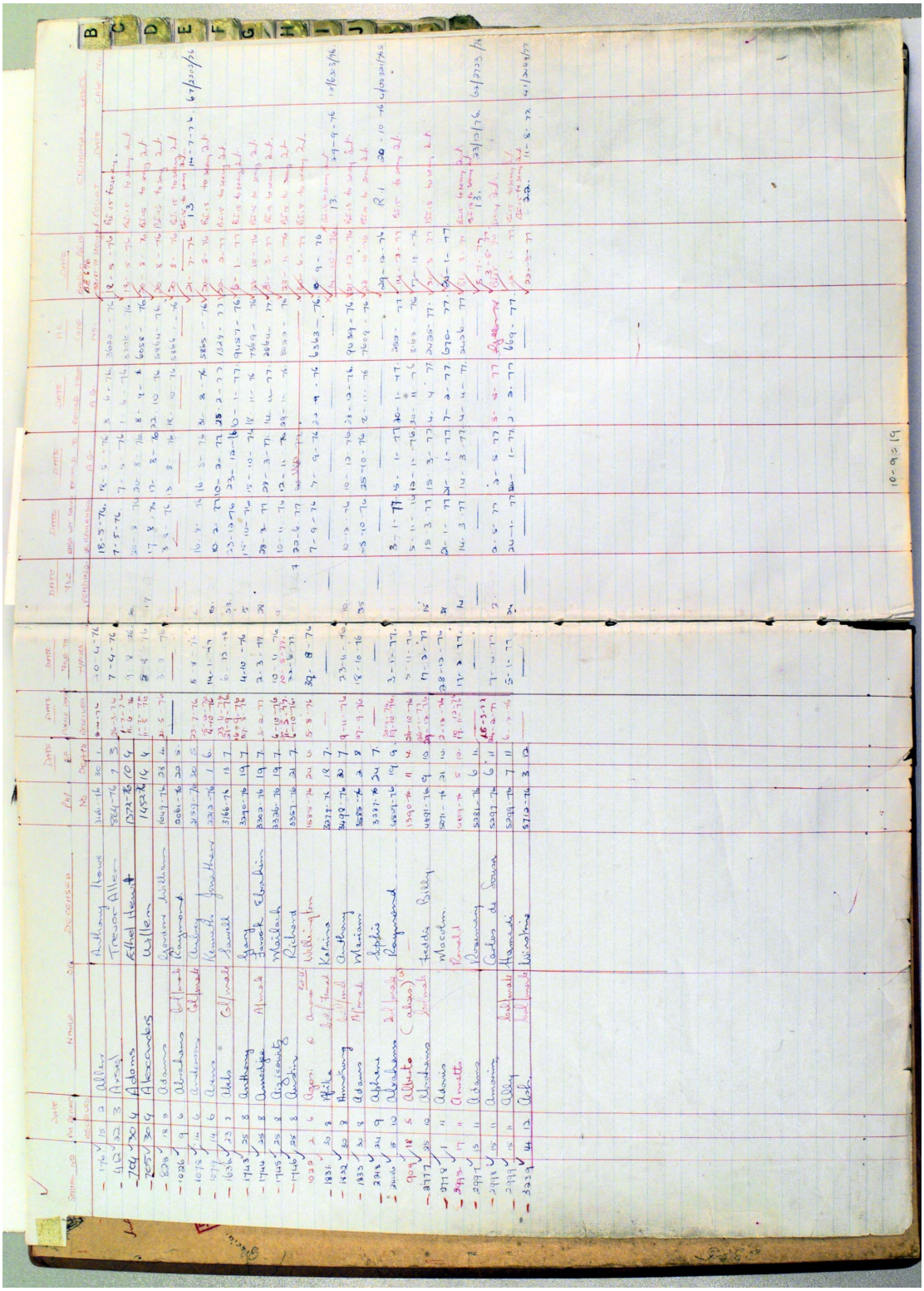


Figure 2. *Doodsondersoeke Register*, 1976, p. A1

contingencies that provide a detailed impression of a time, era or epoch. However, as Janet Malcolm observes, biography is fraught by the motivating disposition of the writer. She reminds us:

> But, of course as everyone knows who has ever heard a piece of gossip, we do not 'own' the facts of our lives at all. This ownership passes out of our hands at birth, at the moment we are first observed. The organs of publicity that have proliferated in our time are only an extension and a magnification of society's fundamental and incorrigible nosiness. Our business is everybody's business, should anybody wish to make it so. The concept of privacy is a sort of screen to hide the fact that almost none is possible in a social universe. In any struggle between the public's inviolable right to be diverted and an individuals wish to be left alone, the public almost always prevails. (After we are dead, the pretense that we may somehow be protected against the world's careless malice is abandoned. The branch of the law that putatively protects our good name against libel and slander withdraws from us indifferently. The dead cannot be libeled or slandered. They are without legal recourse.) (Malcolm, 1993: 86).

What this extract reveals is the precarious nature of the biographical enterprise due to the fact that it involves the details of a person's life that are open to interpretation by the biographer. Usually after a life has run its course and due to the way in which such interpretation is disseminated, there is a resulting blurring between the private and public life of the subject. Here death does not bring closure but rather opens up the events of a life to authorial appropriation and interpretation. An individuals narrative is no longer their own but is instead held delicately in the hands of a writer who is faced with the responsibility of fidelity in retracing such a narrative.

This presents an awareness of the sensitivity that biographical writing should be approached with. If the dead are without legal recourse the task of the biographer is made more acute by their own claims to authorial ownership. Instead of having a dominant authorial consciousness that prevails through a biography where the authors voice becomes louder than the subject on which he or she is writing, a dialogical approach allows "no claim to truth or authority" but rather presents "competing voices and discourses" (Coetzee in Kannemeyer, 2012: 10).

This dialogical awareness can be extended to a methodological approach about what biography can reveal through the way in which the contents of a life can be unpacked and presented. The contents of a life then also extend beyond a person to the material traces that they leave in their wake as a life passes through the world. As Malcolm observes:

> The biographer at work, indeed is like the professional burglar, breaking into a house, rifling through certain drawers that he has good reason to suspect may contain jewelry and money, and triumphantly bearing his loot away.
> (Malcolm, 1993: 86)

Extending this metaphor, objects can come to act as evidence for the traces of lived human lives. At their most basic forms these are material textual traces that provide information about how and where we existed and when; a birth certificate to mark the beginning of a life, a death certificate to denote its end. School reports, stubs from cheque books, team jerseys, school photographs are all traces of human existence in its material form that exist long after a persons time on earth has elapsed.

When writing a biography of a person, pieces of information about their experiences such as where they lived, their backgrounds, education, formative years etc, become more readily apparent when looking at the different kinds of biographies contained in the objects that have defined those various lives.

In this way a biography of a person is made up of an accumulation of other intersecting biographies of people and places and events and most importantly, in the context of this study; things. It is at the intersections between the lives of objects that this research takes place, in the intersections between the stories of people and the material traces of objects that fashion their existence.

As Chris Gosden and Yvonne Marshall have suggested in ‘The Cultural Biography of Objects’ (1999), “people have realised that objects do not just provide a stage setting to human action; they are integral to it”. They continue: “as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other” (1999: 169)

In the biography of an object what is revealed is the information it contains, who it belonged to and when. What is also telling is how it functioned according to who possessed it at a certain point in time and how it was used; where was it kept, who had access to it and how did it change. The biographical approach taken here "seeks to understand the way objects become invested with meaning through the social interactions they are caught up in" according to the notion that "meaning emerges from social action and the purpose of an artefact biography is to illuminate that process" (1999: 170).

In such a way the biography of an object is inextricably connected to the biographies of the people that are represented and shaped through an engagement with it. With this being said the biography of an object can, to different degrees, represent the various biographies of those people connected with the object in question. It can also reveal the connections and disconnections between the different eras that the object moves through and how these changes dictate an understanding and interpretation of the object in its relationship to a specific time.

As Gosden and Marshall have further described, an object biography examines an artefact's life history in order to "address the way social interactions involving people and objects create meaning" and to understand how these meanings "change and are renegotiated through the life of an object" (1999: 169). Objects all have a particular function, they are 'used' so to speak to perform certain designated tasks according to their particular form. When the potential for such use is extinguished they are often discarded or destroyed. Alternatively, their use changes; some objects find their way into museums because of what they can tell an audience about a how a society lived before. Some objects are turned into other things, their components recycled, they find other uses not initially intended. Some are archived to record information no longer immediately applicable to daily use.

In this way objects have multiple lives that endure beyond their original primary function. The first life of an object might end when it no longer fulfils the purpose it was originally intended for. A second life might then begin in the objects appropriated state, where it finds a different use. Yet this is not a definite and fixed beginning and

end for there are slippages between these different lives that very often carry over the traces of memories contained within the object. Again Gosden and Marshall observe: "…as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other" (1999: 169).

Through the various turns of an objects life, certain things, events, people, are carried through in the various traces left in, on or with the object. In this way the object has connections to its own past as well as to the past of those contained within and beyond its immediate temporality.

> A person is ultimately composed of all the objects they have made and transacted and these objects represent the sum total of their agency. A person's agency may then have effects at quite a considerable distance from the individual's body and may continue to have effects after they are dead (1999: 173).

Yet, as its use by those engaged with it changes, there are also disconnections, forgotten elements, uses and purposes that occur at the borders of an object's different lives. Here there occurs a kind of ghosting, a spectral presence of these different traces that gives a shifting temporality to the palimpsest. A drift between these lives that cannot be fixed. As Gosden and Marshall continue: "Objects can be understood only through looking at the cultural contexts which originally produced them and the new circumstances into which they later moved. The histories of many objects are composed of shifts of context and perspective" (1999: 174).

What this research will examine is how the use of an object by people at different times in different settings changes its meaning according to the cultural, socio-political context in which it is framed. Focussing on an archival fragment from apartheid, this study will frame the different lives of the object as it moves through time and its meaning changes. Each chapter will thus consist of a different life of the object in question, examining the narratives that emerge in the converging biographies contained in each era.

The broader conceptual framework is therefore is to examine the multiple lives of this object in order to critically engage with the different and divergent histories that it conjures.

3. Different Lives

In order to trace the different lives of this *Doodsondersoeke Register* Chapter One begins in 1976, the year which the Ledger (as it will now be referred to) is assigned. This will start by tracing the history of apartheid by looking at the bureaucratic procedures which implemented its racial policies into law. A central premise of this study is that an objects biography is constructed from connecting objects and documents that provide a fuller picture of their lives as well as the world they are situated in.

The first chapter then situates the Ledger and the information it records in the legislative field of apartheid. This is done by comparing it to other state documents that connect the information recorded in the Ledger to a particular event; specificaly the Soweto Uprising that took place on June 16th, 1976.

This will provide the first life of the Ledger with some context; as a bureaucratic document made by the state it reflects apartheid ideology, illustrating what the philosopher Giorgio Agamben terms the ‘state of exception’ (Agamben, 2005). This begins with the legislative processes of apartheid in order to makes sense of the way the state of apartheid exceptionalism can be seen as ideologically manifest in the Ledger. Then, extending the theoretical model of Agamben, the chapter ends with an in-depth examination of the way the state interpreted and justified the records documented in the Ledger.

Chapter Two then looks at the Ledger’s second life by comparing another biography that is intimately connected to it; that of Hector Pieterson who is one of the entries in the document. However, following the logic that biographies emerge from other objects, the photograph of Pieterson taken by Sam Nzima is the focus of this chapter. Looking specifically at the photograph’s dissemination, this chapter will discuss how

photography is deployed in the construction of social memory by examining the changing ideological modes of its use and interpretation. Bringing this discussion back to the Ledger, this ends to suggest that way the photograph has been used to construct the narrative of Pieterson has functioned to eclipse the other records in the Ledger discussed in Chapter One. In such a way the narrative of Pieterson has become a predicate for reading the history of the Soweto Uprising that can be traced through the Ledger and thus, in the act of memorialisation that the photograph is made to serve, there comes a process of active forgetting.

Although the Ledger should have been destroyed in 1986 according to the instructions on the disposal slip, it somehow managed to escape the fate of many other similar apartheid era documents. Chapter Three then attempts to trace how the Ledger survived and how this survival characterises its third life. It must be noted that because of the lack of concrete evidence the first part of this chapter relies on here-say and memory. At the core of this study these are subject to a process of selective amnesia that sees recollections and facts distorted to suit certain appropriate and often conflicting narratives. Tracing the Ledger's public appearance using Pierre Nora's notion in Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (1989) of the "material trace" that occurs between the years of 1991 and 1993, this chapter then examines the way in which its use changed when it came into the hands of an artist, Kendell Geers who nominated the Ledger as an artwork with the designation *Untitled 1976* (1993).

By examining the art historical precedent of the found object turned 'readymade' pioneered by Marcel Duchamp, this chapter will move to discuss some of Geers' local influences in the production of this kind of work. The chapter ends on the presence of other material traces that connect the Ledger to the present in order to introduce its next life when it changes again, this time into an object with the reference number MA-1994-211 in the collection of a museum.

Here the material trace of the Ledger in other documents gives it a concrete presence in the fourth life of its biography. Whereas much of its history in the previous chapter has been speculative, based on myth and conflicting narratives, Chapter Four

examines what happens to the Ledger when it shifts from a found object turned readymade into a piece of historical paraphernalia used for the purposes of museological display in 1994. Again another biography forms the foundational basis of this discussion, specifically that of the Africana Museum, which bought the object. This Museum was going through its own structural redefinition as it was relaunched as Museum Africa in August 1994. Mirroring the broader social and political transformation occurring in South Africa at the time, the biography of the Ledger in this setting illustrates the complexities of change and the ways that these impact on the interpretation of the history that it contains.

Examining the modes of its display this chapter will look at how the Ledger functions to bolster the narrative surrounding Hector Pieterson, further entrenching him in a discourse of nation building as Museum Africa shifted its ideological discourse to one that was more culturally 'inclusive'. Rather than providing a discursive counterpoint to the nuances of the history that he has been made to represent, the Ledger is made to function as a historical object whose currency comes from its connection to Hector Pieterson. Similarly this was the same for Geers' whose choice to nominate the object as an artwork was dictated by such a presence. The rest of the chapter will then discuss the conflicting interpretation of the Ledger as an artwork which carries Geers' narrative versus reading it as a an archival record that documents the extent of apartheid violence.

As an archival record the Ledger's placement in the Museum has had its value reduced by the currency invested in the trace of Pieterson's name; the same reason it was chosen by Geers. As a consequence the accumulation of records in the Ledger go unnoticed due to the fetishised modes in which historical figures are given prominence in the construction of social memory.

Finally the conclusion will end with the final life of the Ledger as it is caught between the focussed fetish of Pieterson as it exists in the two forms of MA-1994-211 and *Untitled 1976* (1993). This will argue for avenues that can be explored regarding this particular objet, pointing to the possibilities of how further sustained research could

do some archival justice and thereby reconfigure the ways in which the Ledger is interpreted.

Chapter 1 - First Life

Introduction

Objects have multiple lives that take shape according to how they are used, when and by whom. More specifically, objects in their first lives are defined by the original purpose they were designed to fulfill. The object of this inquiry, the *Doodsondersoeke Register* (termed as the Ledger) that is dated 1976, can be considered as a historical by-product of the bureaucratic procedures that enforced the political ideology of apartheid. To consider the 'first life' of the Ledger it is important to start by building a chronological understanding of how the document functioned according to its primary designation as a death inquest register. To do this it is necessary to, at the same time, establish what apartheid was and how it functioned in order to provide a contextual character to the Ledger's first life.

As apartheid slowly began to crumble at the beginning of the 1990's, the South African state authorities destroyed an almost incomprehensible number of documents and evidence that would demonstrate the extent of its institutionalised policies of racial discrimination. The Ledger should have also been destroyed as indicated on the disposal slip attached to its front cover, yet it wasn't. Its destruction was originally scheduled in 1986, prior to the wide-spread state 'clean-up' of sensitive documents that occurred as the 1990's began. Somehow it escaped this fate and exists today as an object that has accumulated multiple contingencies and different lives, each with their own narratives.

Divided into six sections this chapter will examine the first life of the Ledger according to its primary function as a bureaucratic object belonging to the state. The first section titled the Legislative Field of Apartheid will discuss the history of apartheid as a political ideology in order to establish the discursive terrain that will provide a basis to the Ledger's first life. Examining how apartheid came to be instituted as a system of governance, this section will discuss how the passage of

legislation that contributed to its political implementation was in fact a process of what Breyten Breytenbach calls "other-making" or *andersmaak* (Breytenbach, 1999: 69).

As Mark Sanders notes, apartheid was "in the most general terms, an interdict against the development of a social formation" (Sanders, 2002: 61). The social formation that he refers to was the co-existence of black and white South Africans as citizens with equal civil rights. Instead, apartheid established separate development as a political ideology that was predicated on an institutionalised system of racial segregation.

Section two, Apartheid as the State of Exception, develops this notion of *andersmaak* or "other-making" to consider apartheid as a process of 'exception making'. Using Giorgio Agamben's notion of the exception developed in his two works *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998) and *State of Exception* (2005), this section will establish a theoretical framework with which to interrogate how apartheid attempted to normalise racial and social exceptionalism through its bureaucratic processes. This is a crucial step to understanding the first life of the Ledger because as Agamben suggests, the state of exception occurs at the intersection of the "legal and the political" (Agamben, 2005:1). As an object designed to fulfill a bureaucratic purpose, the Ledger can be understood primarily as a legal document. However when considering the theory of "bare life" that Agamben develops in *Homo Sacer* in which he illustrates how the "living body becomes what is at stake in a society's political strategies" (Agamben, 1998: 10), the information in the Ledger will come to be seen later as a concentration of apartheid exceptionalism.

1976 was a significant year in South Africa's history, both in terms of the struggle against apartheid and the state's intensification of its policies of racial segregation. The Ledger's first life can be considered as a culmination of these intersecting histories. It is not enough to simply examine the Ledger without any context; to understand its first life it is necessary to look at how the information it records echoes these histories.

Section three, The Bureaucracy of Inquest will then move to understand the state procedures that the Ledger was designed to fulfill, namely the processes whereby a death inquest is required to be opened. To understand the Ledger as an object this section moves to develop a material notion of the Ledger's original purpose. In a sense this helps to define the quotidian nature of the document as a Death Inquest Register.

Section four, Violence Finding Legal Form expands on the notion of "bare life" to consider how the states implementation of apartheid policies led to a concentration of the state of exception that can be seen in the Ledger. The defining event of 1976 was the Soweto Uprising that began on June 16th, where pupils from schools in Soweto boycotted classes in protest over Afrikaans being used as the primary medium of instruction. This resistance was met with significant reciprocal force by the state and in the days and months after June 16th the violence quickly spread to other parts of the country.

Section five, Bare Life and Bantu Education will focus on the state's policy that led to the Soweto Uprising know as The Bantu Education Act. This is significant in terms of the Ledgers first life because during the protest action that began on June 16th many pupils were killed by the police with their deaths being recorded in the Ledger.

Section six, Bureaucracy as Political Violence examines another state document that invests the first life of the Ledger with capital, specifically the Cillié Commission of Inquiry. As has been discussed Bantu Education and the resistance to its precepts resulted in a concentration of names in the Ledger that begin on June 16th and correlate to the violence that spread throughout the country in the wake of the Soweto Uprising. The Ledger and the Cillié Commission are two accounts of the same event. The Ledger as a register of names and referring case numbers and dates represents a purely statistical account of the violence that began on June 16th, 1976. However, in order to understand those statistics as an illustration of apartheid exceptionalism, the Cillié Commission shows how the state interpretation of the events of June 16th attempted to normalise the loss of life that is accounted for in the Ledger.

1. The Legislative Field of Apartheid

> As the prospect of democratic transition in South Africa drew close, tons of files, microfilm, audio and computer tapes and disks were shredded, wiped and incinerated. In little more than six months in 1993, while the political parties of the apartheid state negotiated with the representatives of the liberation movements, some 44 metric tons of records from the headquarters of the National Intelligence Service alone were destroyed...(Bell and Ntsebeza, 2001: 7).

In this opening extract taken from *Unfinished Business: South Africa, Apartheid and Truth* (2001), Terry Bell and Dumisa Ntsebeza reflect upon the extent to which the archive of apartheid records, in the dying days of the regime, were destroyed *en masse* by the state. In fact, as they write, there was so much material that the state incinerators could not cope, with private companies being co-opted to help destroy the evidence of apartheid's brutal atrocities against its victims. They continue:

> Into these flames disappeared the last vestiges of the voices of thousands of victims. It was a paper Auschwitz, an attempt to eradicate all confirmation of the nightmare memories of the tortured and the living dead, to obliterate all traces of those victims whose physical remains lay scattered in unmarked graves around the country (Bell and Ntsebeza, 2001: 7).

According to the disposal slip or '*Beskikkingstrokie'* attached to the front cover of the death inquest register from 1976, which approximately summons the end of its first life, it too should have been destroyed in these furnaces in 1986, ten years after the period it chronicles. Strangely, in light of the destruction described above, it survived. Somehow, the Ledger managed to escape these destructive furnaces and today exists as a primary historical source that archives the extent of apartheid violence.

To give context to why the Ledger survived it is necessary to begin with its first life in order to examine its primary function as a material product of apartheid bureaucracy. As described by the disposal slip the document is a '*doodsondersoeke register*' from the year 1976. The methodological challenge that presents itself at the at the beginning of its first life is how to make sense of the information that the Ledger records and contains. To address this challenge it is necessary to begin by establishing

apartheid as the framing device for the first life of the Ledger by discussing some of the primary legislative policies and how they were executed. In order to understand how the Ledger's first life represents an ideological manifestation of apartheid bureaucracy these legislative acts will be considered as illustrations of the action of apartheid exceptionalism.

As Bell and Ntsebeza have shown, the execution of apartheid consisted of an accumulation of records and documents made in order to account for the victims of its policies of segregation. Such an accumulation represents the bureaucratic basis of apartheid which was defined by the exclusion of the majority of the population from the political governance of South Africa. In order to account for such an exclusion the state employed exceptional laws applicable only to certain people determined by their racial classification.

Focussing this assertion the pieces of legislation discussed will frame the context of a historical event, specifically the Soweto Uprising that occurred on June 16th, in order to discuss how the concentration of names in the Ledger around this period represent the ideological implementation of apartheid's segregational policies in bureaucratic form.

In order to consider apartheid in terms of the exception (predicated on racial difference) one only has to look at the translation of the word; literally taken to mean "the status of being apart". The entire system of apartheid governance was based upon racial discrimination, manifesting in separate development. The origin of this system of governance in South Africa can be said to begin in 1948 when the United Party led by the incumbent prime minister Jan Smuts lost the general election on the 26th of May to the *Herenigde Nasionale Party* (Reunited National Party which later came to be just the National Party) led by D.F Malan (Peffers, 2009: xvi).

However as John Peffer notes "it would be a misunderstanding to view the legal structure of apartheid, or its psychological and social effects, as beginning in suddenly and fully in 1948 or as ending abruptly with the change of regime in 1994" (Peffer, 2009: xvi). Instead apartheid can be understood as a development of earlier colonial

tendencies of the state that sought to secure white minority rule by having it written it into law. As Bell and Ntsebeza observe:

> ...the roots of this peculiar form of oppression and racial domination reach back to the age of slavery. It continued through the era of industrial development as well as in the South Africa Act of 1909, the historic compromise between Briton and Boer that entrenched racial domination in South Africa (Bell and Ntsebeza, 2001: 15).[1]

Further emphasising this point, Peffer continues: "much of the separatist legislation enacted after 1948 merely hardened a model for white minority rule in Africa that was derived from nineteenth-century British colonial policies" (Peffer, 2009: xvi). Following their ascent to power in 1948 the National Government led by D.F Malan swiftly enacted a series of acts that further entrenched the historically racist governing policies of South African politics, thus writing the exception into law.

The notion of 'apartheid' came about as the winning campaign strategy of the right-wing Nationalist government that was formally instituted along legal, political and economic lines to institute separate development determined by racial classifications.[2] It was the action of seemingly normalising this hierarchical distinction (founded upon the exception) between races that defined the government's attempt to contain the state of exception that underscored apartheid ideology by having it written into law. Each act can be seen as a process of exception making whose result would legally institute the state of exception into the legislative field of apartheid as a system of governance.

Given that the passage of legislation, from conception to executive signature takes some time, the legislative cornerstones of apartheid occurred with remarkable speed. That the National Party did not expect to win the general election in 1948 only added

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[1] The South Africa Act of 1909 was an act of the British parliament that created the Union of South Africa from the British colonies of the Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Orange River Colony and the Transvaal.

[2] The National Party didn't expect to win the general elections in 1948 but were assisted by Jan Smuts' preoccupation with international politics and the establishment of the League of Nations (later to become the U.N). Domestically this was regarded as alienating his white constituents with the vote swinging in favor of D.F. Malan's National Party (Sanders, 2002: 63).

to the pace at which it began to introduce its policies that would further entrench the racist historical precursors of South African politics.

By the beginning of the 1950's legislation designed to govern the day-to-day activities of different race groups was already in place. Acts like the Population Registration Act (No. 30 of 1950) and The Group Areas Act (No. 41 of 1950) firmly established a definition of racial difference seemingly normalising what was to follow in a broader attempt to legally and politically disenfranchise the majority of the country's population. This was the basis for permitting the exception along racial terms that would characterise how apartheid would continue to function as an ideological policy of difference.

Building from the foundation laid by these types of policies and taking shape in the 1960s and 1970s, the legislation became far more ambitious and comprehensive in its scope of implementing exceptionalism; involving the removal of black people from white areas and the establishment of separate homelands or 'Bantustans'.

The establishment of separate homelands that were, according to the government, meant to be self-governing, resulted in black South Africans no longer being regarded as full-citizens with their civil rights being severely curtailed. As Bell and Ntsebeza observe, this had far deeper socio-economic ramifications for the development of the country.

> The task was nothing less than moulding South Africa and all who lived in it into what he [D.F. Malan] saw as a pre-ordained configuration. It would balance the ideological needs of a deeply ingrained racism with the demands of both the traditional and the emerging industrial sector for labour which, because of the country's demographics, would have largely to be black. It was on this basis that the elaborate 'homelands' policy was refined ... At a practical level, it was an attempt to bridge the demands of farmers and small contractors for cheap unskilled labour and of emerging Afrikaner and established 'English' big business for a more skilled and settled workforce (Bell and Ntsebeza 2001: 20).

As Audie Klotz (1995) notes, this type of socio-economic engineering was met with some international condemnation that threatened to expose the exceptional character

of apartheid discrimination. Highlighting the states moves to explain such policies she identifies the way in which the government justified such measures:

> Because South Africa institutionalised segregation at a time when the international trend was to favour racial equality, this global reaction to domestic discrimination reflected the exceptional nature of apartheid policies. Indeed as international criticism of apartheid increased, the South African government tried to justify its segregation in cultural rather than racial terms. In attempting to establish the nominal independence of its reserves, or 'tribal homelands,' South Africa proclaimed that it did not exclude Africans from political participation because they were franchised in these supposedly sovereign states (Klotz, 1995: 3).

However, describing this uneasy relationship to, and exclusion from, state politics, Klotz identifies a primary characteristic of apartheid which was to privilege the rights of a group over those of an individual. She notes that "although the racial and cultural dimensions coexisted uneasily, the Afrikaner ideology of apartheid privileged group (rather than individual) rights" (Klotz, 1995: 4).

The exclusion of the rights of individuals in the political and legal order of apartheid is what defines its ideological exceptionalism. To discuss how the exceptional nature of apartheid is concentrated in and defines the first life of the Ledger, Giorgio Agamben's theory of 'bare life' which he develops in his text *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998) provides a useful lens to view the records it contains. The reduction to bare life is what occurs when a political order sanctions the death of a citizen by excluding them from its regular legal parameters by employing the exception.

Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, in particular his theory of bio-politics developed in 'The History of Sexuality', Agamben describes how human life is distinguished by its relationship to a political order. "At the threshold of the modern era" Agamben writes, "natural life begins to be included in the mechanisms and calculations of State power and politics turns to *biopolitics*" (Agamben, 1998: 10).

In terms of the Ledger this is useful because, as a death inquest register, it represents the loss of human life and the state mechanisms for accounting for that loss. Summarising Foucault, Agamben clarifies by saying "a society's 'threshold of

biological modernity' is situated at the point at which the species and the individual as a simple living body become what is at stake in a society's political strategies" (Agamben,1998: 10). This provides a useful lens for the Ledger's first life because it allows us to frame and comprehend how state power penetrates and determines "subjects' very bodies and forms of life" (Agamben, 1998: 11).

Bare life then is at the ontological core of the state of exception which functions to exclude subjects from a political order. This is of primary concern when looking at the Ledger because, as a death inquest register, it represents the reduction to bare life of apartheid subjects. Upon further reflection on how the state later interpreted the records in the Ledger, the state of exception employed to carry out such a procedure will be revealed later through an examination of how the same records find juridical recourse in the Cillié Commission of Inquiry.

2. Apartheid as the State of Exception

In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998), Agamben begins by drawing the Aristotelian distinction between two forms of life, *zoē* and *bios* in classical greek philosophy. *Zoē* he points out refers to the "simple fact of living common to all living beings" which includes both animals and people. *Bios* indicates the form of living "proper to an individual or group" (Agamben, 1998: 10). *Bios* in classical thought is what defined living in the *polis* or city state. Simple natural life defined the basic condition of man as a reproductive animal and as such was confined to the arena of the home.

Aristotle opposed the simple fact of living to a politically qualified life that is concerned with the order and structure of a society. This politically qualified life therefore differentiates man from other living beings because, as Agamben points out, its goal is to create a form a living (*bios*) that is qualified by existing with regard to the good of an ordered community.

However, in terms of the modern era these two conditions of living, one of existing as a simple living being and the other as a political subject living in society, become increasingly blurred when seen against the backdrop of how the nation state, (in this

instance the totalitarian system of apartheid) defines its subjects. Agamben explains that it is at the threshold of the modern era that "natural life begins to be included in the mechanisms and calculations of State power" (Agamben, 1998: 10) and *zoē* enters into the sphere of the *polis*.

This inclusion of natural life into a political order (in this instance defined by apartheid) is of importance to understanding how the Ledger illustrates the state of exception in this study because it predicates the fundamental irony or paradox that Agamben identifies as an 'inclusive exclusion'. In order to exclude citizens from a political order what is required is a form of legal recourse that would first include them as exemplifying the exception.

As a death inquest register the Ledger illustrates this process where the "simple living body becomes what is at stake in a society's political strategies" (Agamben, 1998: 10) because it records the inquests into the unnatural deaths of apartheid's subjects. As will be seen, the record and later interpretation of these inquests found in the Cillié Commission serves to reduce those subjects to the objects of bare life. As such, it demarcates the space of the exception that includes those subjects in the recourse of its normal legal parameters so as to allow for their exclusion from the political order; in short, the records in the Ledger reflect the power of the state to condone and thus authorise death.[3] Agamben expresses this with a summation from Foucault which states;

> What follows is a kind of beastialization of man achieved through the most sophisticated political techniques. For the first time in history, the possibility of the social sciences are made known, and at once it becomes possible both to protect life and authorise a holocaust (Foucault in Agamben, 1998: 10).

Here bare life is inextricably linked to politically qualified life because it is the both the principle object and subject that can be affirmed or taken away by the sovereign power of the apartheid state. As apartheid frames the first life of the Ledger in its

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[3] As shall be discussed later in regard to legislative acts, this power to reduce citizens to bare life occurred through the bureaucratic recourse of the state to initiate both inquests in the case of unnatural deaths (of which the Ledger is an accumulated example) and commissions of inquiry (such as the Cillié Commission) that would position the exception into the rule of law.

original form as a bureaucratic document, then Agamben's observation in his later text *State of Exception* (2005) about what constitutes the nature of such exceptional measures is useful. Suggesting that there is, to date, no theory of the state of exception in public law, the difficultly at arriving at such a definition of the term results from the "zone of indistinction" of its "position at the limit between politics and law" (Agamben, 2005: 3).

To position the Ledger in this formulation what should be asked is how does the records it contains reveal the legal recourse needed to justify the political ideology of apartheid exceptionalism (determined by race)? Citing a "widely held opinion" that the state of exception constitutes a "point of imbalance between public law and political fact", Agamben presents a useful way of addressing this question when he suggests that the state of exception "appears as the legal form of that which cannot have legal form" (Agamben, 2005: 1).

This is crucial for the first life of the Ledger because it illustrates how the state of exception is embodied within the juridicial procedures which the Ledger was originally designed to fulfil. To condone death and to reduce the citizen as subject to a political order to the object of bare life, the Ledger is the first step in the legal process that recognises the exception as an inherent part of that political order. As Agamben suggests:

> If the law employs the exception - that is the suspension of the law itself - as its original means of referring to and encompassing life, then a theory of the state of exception is the preliminary condition for any definition of the relation that binds, and at the same time, abandons the living being into law (Agamben, 2005: 1).

As apartheid was a system predicated on racial segregation, the majority of the population were defined, through exceptional legislation, as second class citizens and, as a result, forced to live on the margins of social, political and juridical representation due to racially legislated exceptionalism. The Ledger can be said to be a material record of that process where the politically excluded subject is included into the legal procedures of state power.

By firstly looking at the material character of the information documented in the Ledger what will be discussed is how the state of exception that defined the ideological structure of apartheid came to bind living beings into law in order to subsequently abandon them into the juridicial no-mans-land of bare life represented by the figure Agamben refers to as *homo sacer*.

Anthony Downey notes in his essay 'Zones of Indistinction: Giorgio Agambens 'Bare Life and the Politics of Aesthetics' (2009) that the exemplary figure of this kind of exceptionalism in historical terms is *homo sacer.* This he describes as "an obscure figure of Roman law who, although once a citizen, is reduced to 'bare life' by sovereign decree and deprived of basic rights such as representation before the law" (Downey, 2009: 110). Thus the figure of *homo sacer* which Agamben names to as the protagonist of his work, can come to be seen in the records of the Ledger as embodying the exception at the base of apartheid ideology.

Agamben likens this to a 'legal civil war' where in response to extreme internal conflicts, resistance and unrest, the state has legal and political recourse to employ its full and unmitigated power to silence dissent. When considering the Ledger's function as a death inquest register functioning to legally account for the unnatural loss of life, Agamben makes a useful observation that can be used to situate bare life at the heart of apartheid exceptionalism. He writes;

> In this sense, modern totalitarianism can be defined as the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system. (Agamben, 2005: 2).

To see how this process occurred in order to trace the bare life contained in the records of the Ledger it is important to understand its material quality. The next section will look at the bureaucratic legislation that the Ledger was designed to service. It is important to understand the Ledger as a material object, an index or a register designed for the accumulation of a certain type of record, namely a repository of inquests into unnatural deaths.

3. The Bureaucracy of Inquest

As the Ledger is a death inquest register the first piece of legislation that directly relates to understanding the information it contains is the Inquests Act 58 of 1959 whose purpose is described so as "To provide for the holding of inquests in cases of deaths or alleged deaths apparently occurring from other than natural causes and for matters incidental thereto" (1959: 36).[4] In this act provisions are made for the investigation into a death that was deemed to be unnatural by the state such as those discussed above.[5] Here, the definition of an unnatural death is described in the act as follows;

> Subject to the provisions of any other law providing for an investigation of the circumstances of any death, any policeman who has reason to believe that any person has died and that such person has died from other than natural causes, shall investigate or cause to be investigated the circumstances of the death of alleged death (1959: 36).

It further bestows special powers to the state to medically examine bodies of those deceased persons suspected to have died from unnatural causes for the purposes of "ascertaining with greater certainty the cause of death". After such an examination has taken place and a report detailing the additional circumstances of the death has been filed with the public prosecutor, the Act outlines that;

> If on the information submitted to him...it appears to the magistrate that a death has occurred and that such death was not due to natural causes, he shall proceed to hold an inquest as to the circumstances and cause of the death (1959: 38).

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[4] Published in the Union Gazette Extraordinary, 3rd July, 1959. [No. 58, 1959]. pp. 36 - 45.

[5] "Unnatural Death" can be described as follows:
Deaths due to violence and the consequences of the injuries that result in death. This could be cases of homicide (murder or culpable homicide), suicide or accidents (including motor vehicle accidents). Consequences of injuries that may result in death include infections such as lung infections, blood clots to the lungs and tetanus or rabies after a dog bite.
Any death, including deaths that would otherwise be classified as being "natural" where it is suspected that the death was due to an act of neglect by any person including medical staff.
http://www.westerncape.gov.za/eng/pubs/public_info/y/234263

It is also worthwhile to note the stipulations made by the Act that determine the findings of such an inquest. Here the biographical details of the deceased are recorded as well as the cause and circumstances of the death.

> (2) The magistrate holding an inquest shall record a finding upon the inquest
>
> (a) as to the identity of the deceased person;
>
> (b) as to the cause or likely cause of death;
>
> (c) as to the date of the death;
>
> (d) as to whether the death was brought about by any act of omission involving or amounting to an offence on the part of any person.
>
> (3) If the magistrate is unable to record any such finding, he shall record that fact. (1959: 42).

The Ledger is a record of this process. Each entry with its dates and reference numbers to dockets and post-mortems leads to an inquest file containing these details. Whilst these individual files can be presumed to have been destroyed, the Ledger remains as an accumulated record of inquests into unnatural deaths. Yet whilst the Ledger is a register of the reference numbers that would lead one to these individual files, there is another document where the details of such files are recorded more fully, namely the Cillié Commission of Inquiry.

As will be discussed, the Cillié Commission and the Ledger can be considered as two accounts that document the same event, the Soweto Uprising that began on June 16th 1976. Whilst the individual inquest files that the Ledger records were presumably destroyed, the Cillié Commission has details of some of the inquests recorded in the Ledger. Therefore to understand the first life of the Ledger it is useful to turn attention to the Commission itself. As it will be shown, the Commission represents the state's attempt to sanction the records in the Ledger and thus can be considered as part of the bureaucratic mechanisms of apartheid exceptionalism.

In order to get to this point where the Ledger's first life can be contextualised by the Cillié Commission the next section will examine how the exceptional legislation of apartheid was put into place and how it leads up to the loss of life recorded in the Ledger.

4. Violence Finding Legal Form

One of the fundamental principles at the cornerstone of the state of exception is that the exception becomes the rule. To emphasise the violent form that this took it is necessary to note that these laws were enacted at a physical, biological level that sought to reduce a person's individual liberty and sovereignty through a system of governance predicated on racial classification. This section therefore aims to provide the setting for the exceptional legislation that characterised apartheid in order to understand how the Ledger first life comes to embody a concentration of the bare life that defined the marginalised apartheid subject.

In this sense what we can see is how the "species and the individual as a simple living body becomes what is at stake in a society's political strategies" (Agamben, 1998: 10). Due to the biological premise of difference that underpinned apartheid's exceptional legislation what will be discussed is how the state of exception functioned to incorporate bare life into its political strategies in order to exclude the majority of its citizens.

Here it is also important to note that there are more apartheid laws than there is space to discuss in this study. Therefore the particular choices made here speak to the idea of how an official system was legislated so that the apartheid regime could legally and systematically record and classify subjects in order to reduce them to bare life. This discussion identifies legislation along two criteria. Broadly, it examines legislation that defined the exceptional character of apartheid that normalised its policies of racial segregation. More specifically, to focus this argument, it highlights legislative acts that will assist a reading the information in the Ledger as representing the character of apartheid exceptionalism.

Moving between the larger character of apartheid policies and a specific case study of how these were carried out and implemented in the course of events leading to the Soweto Uprising of June 16, 1976, allows the Ledger and the Cillié Commission to be used as comparative illustrative examples of how such legislation found bureaucratic form in employing the state of exception. In the Ledger, bare life becomes a

compression that begins around the period of June 16 and intensifies over the following months. In this sense the Ledger can be viewed as an ideological manifestation of apartheid as the state of exception because it is a record of the names of victims who died as a physical result of such violence used to enforce its exceptional legislation.

To arrive at a point where the names that occur in the Ledger can be understood as the result of systematic bureaucratic procedures carried out in accordance with racist legislation I will begin with an examination of the foundational laws that were designed to normalise the system of racial classification that would allow the apartheid state to exclude certain races from the citizenry of South Africa.

One of the first notable pieces of exceptional legislation that was directed at governing an individuals physical autonomy was the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No 55 of 1949 which forbade marriages between Whites and non-Whites (Christopher 1994: 104). When paired with the Immorality Amendment Act, Act No 21 of 1950, which forbade extra-marital sexual relationships between races, this act represents the states exceptional attempt to govern peoples physical interactions according to racial difference. In many ways this conforms to puritanical ideals that characterised this particular type of Calvinistic Afrikaner nationalism.[6] As Agamben points out, this has significance when understanding how the body has been positioned at the centre of political discourse. He observes that:

> [t]he 'right' to life," writes Foucault, explaining the importance assumed by sex as a political issue, "to ones body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs and, beyond all the oppressions or 'alienation,' the 'right' to rediscover what one is and all that one can be, this 'right' – which the classical juridical system was utterly incapable of comprehending – was the political response to all these new procedures of power (Agamben, 1998: 72).

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[6] For a examination of Afrikaner Calvinism and its relationship to Nationalism see Du Toit, A. "Profane Uses of the Sacred. Puritans in Africa?". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. Vol. 27, no. 02. April 1985, pp. 209-240. "gave rise to a nascent chosen people ideology among early Afrikaners, which provided much of the motivation for, as well as the self-understanding of, that central event in Afrikaner history, the Great Trek, while simultaneously serving to legitimate the conquest and subordination of indigenous peoples; and that, mediated in this way, an authentic tradition of Afrikaner Calvinism thus constitutes the root source of modern Afrikaner nationalism and the ideology of apartheid".

It is worth mentioning here that the physical separation of races, down to their marriage and sexual relations had deeper implications for how the rest of apartheid legislation would be implemented. What these two acts did was to effectively entrench the notion of difference by considering such relationships as a biological acts of "miscegenation" which threatened racial purity at the heart of Calvinistic ideology embedded in Afrikaner Nationalism. In such a way this reveals the state of exception within the character of apartheid because it maintains racial difference at its ideological core.

As will be seen in the next section which examines The Bantu Education Act, this legislation informs the basis for understanding how the first life of the Ledger embodies the way in which the bare life of apartheid's subjects was manufactured and recorded.

Further expanding this distinction of racial difference came the Population Registration Act No 30 of 1950. This piece of legislation "provided for the compilation of a register of the entire South African population" (Dyzenhaus 1991: 40). The South African population now became divided into three racial groups: 'White', 'Black' ('African', 'Native' and/or 'Bantu') and 'Coloured'; the last of which was further subcategorised into 'Cape Malay', 'Griqua', 'Indian', 'Chinese' and 'Cape Coloured' (Christopher 1994: 103). Classification was determined according to physical appearance and social acceptability (including linguistic skills). "Anyone who contested their classification could appeal in the first instance to a special board set up for that purpose and headed by a judge or magistrate, present or former, and then to the law courts" (Riley 1991: 20).[7] By drawing legislation that was determined by racial exceptionalism what can be seen is the way that the state politicised bare life by including it in a political order that consequently provided legal recourse to exclude the bodies of its subjects.

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[7] This led to the notorious 'pencil test' where a pencil was inserted into a persons hair as a quick way of determining their ethnicity. Depending on the texture of the hair and how easily the pencil was released thus determined a persons race. As a consequence families were separated and forced to live apart. It has been argued that this symbolizes the absurdity of apartheid's racial classificatory procedures.

This act can be seen as a key to understanding apartheid and its system of record keeping because the pieces of legislation that followed used this as a measure to enforce their segregative policies. This pseudo-scientific system of classification defined by racial exceptionalism became far more insidiously executed then in the Group Areas Act No 40 of 1950 where urban areas where divided into racially segregated zones where only a certain race could live or work.[8] Group areas were created "for the exclusive ownership and occupation of a designated group" (Christopher 1994: 105). It further became "a criminal offence for a member of one racial group to reside on or own land in an area set aside by proclamation for another race" (Dyzenhaus 1991: 71).[9]

Another cornerstone of apartheid exceptionalism was ironically named the Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents Act No 67 of 1952. Commonly known as the Pass Laws (in plural due to the fact that it had many revisions and titles), it required that back people carry a pass on their persons at all times. A pass included a photograph, details of place of origin, employment record, tax payments, and encounters with the police. It was a criminal offence to be unable to produce a pass when required to do so by the police. No black person could leave a rural area for an urban one without a permit from the local authorities. On arrival in an urban area a permit to seek work had to be obtained within 72 hours. In short, this act co-ordinated documents by abolishing passes and introducing what were to be officially termed as 'reference books' instead.

With the apartheid state politicising bare life by placing it at the centre of its legislative determinations through systematic racial classification, the state of exception was consequently extended to other avenues of peoples lives such as the standards and modes of education. Here the exception was employed to create an unequal level of education designed to create what Agamben (1998: 10) refers to as

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[6] This act was later replaced by the Group Areas Act of 1957 (Dyzenhaus 1991: 79; see the Native Urban Areas Amendment Act of 1957)

[7] This would have later implications as seen in the Separate Amenities act upon which Bantu Education would be applied.

the “docile bodies” apartheid needed in order to maintain the economic superiority of white minority rule.

To examine how this process resulted in the bare life represented in the Ledger the next section will examine the Bantu Education Act. Due to the fact that the Soweto Uprising which began on June 16th, 1976 and quickly spread around the country stemmed from resistance to Bantu Education, it can be surmised that this piece of legislation has significant impact on comprehending the bare life in the Ledger. The government was quick to enforce the full weight of its power in an attempt to stop the protests and therefore, in the wake of such violent retribution, the state of exception is revealed as a compression in the Ledger.

5. Bare Life and Bantu Education

It was against the setting of exceptional legislation described above that the Bantu Education Act No 47 of 1953 was passed.[10] The major impetus of this act was to further entrench the already racially segregated educational system in South Africa. In terms of understanding how the state of exception is concentrated in the Ledger, a single exceptional provision in this act stands out as the primary reason for the accumulation of bare life it records. This was the implementation of the use of Afrikaans as the primary medium of instruction in black schools.

Whilst this reveals the sophisticated political technology of apartheid legislation that employed the exception to include its subjects, it also illustrates the politicisation of bare life which exists to be excluded by the state. By denying its subjects access to first language instruction based on racial exceptionalism, apartheid attempted to exclude from those subjects the most basic condition of individual subjectivity which as we will see, is the precursor to bare life.

The Afrikaans medium decree was met with great opposition from scholars and parents alike as well as the school governing bodies themselves. When this opposition

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[10] It can be suggested that Bantu Education, in terms of the Ledger’s biography, forms part of its pre-life. Put another way this act forms part of the political conditions that account for some of the names recorded in the Ledger due to the nature of their deaths which occurred in protest of this bill.

culminated in protest action by scholars on June 16th 1976 the state was unprepared for the extent of the resistance and as a result a number of school children were killed in confrontations with the police. With such exceptional action being taken by the police, protests spilled over to the rest of the country with many more deaths ensuing in violent confrontations with the police over the following months.

Bantu Education can be seen as a way of accounting for the compression of the state of exception in the Ledger because it is the point from which the bare life that it records begins to become concentrated. To further explore how this process finds its origins in Bantu Education what follows is an examination of the legal foundations that sought to include bare life into the legal mechanics of the state's calculations so that it could be politically excluded later. When resistance to this educational policy intensified in the form of the Soweto Uprising the state used exceptional force to counteract this dissent. The result of this force and loss of life is recorded in the Ledger (which can be seen as a compression of the state of exception).

Pioneered by the Minister of Native Affairs, Hendrik Verwoed (who would later become Prime Minister), the Bantu Education Act is often depicted as one "based on the assumption of an inferior potential in African minds" and as "explicitly designed to prepare blacks for an inferior place in society" (Davenport and Saunders, 2000: 674). To substantiate this, a remark Verwoerd made when speaking on the new education system in 1954 is often cited where he states: "There is no place for [a black man] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour. Within his own community, however, all doors are open" (Giliomee, 2009: 190).

Echoing Klotz's earlier observation on the uneasy relationship that was manufactured between culture and race, Herman Giliomee recounts some of Verwoerd's rhetoric:

> In this speech Verwoerd attacked the previous education policy, which, in his view, showed the black man "the green pastures of the European but still did not allow him to graze there". He criticised the policy as uneconomic because money was spent on education "with no specific aim". He claimed that gave rise to much frustration among educated blacks because they could find no employment acceptable to them. The new educational system should have its roots "in the spirit and being of a Bantu society" and "serve the respective ethnic communities" (Gilomee, 2009: 190).

Here ‘culture’ in the shape of ‘Bantu society’ and the ‘respective ethnic communities’ assumed the facade of legitimating a legislative policy predicated on racial exception outlined in previous legislation. As Giliomee observes in the initial period of its implementation (from 1954 - 1967) there was a “strong emphasis on the provision on a mass basis of basic literacy to black children as preparation for semi-skilled jobs” (Gilomee, 2009: 190). Stressing the need for a socio-economic analysis of the act, he notes that there are similarities between Verwoerd’s policy and the introduction of mass education in other industrialising societies (such as the USA and Britain) where the governments saw the need for social control and appropriately trained labour.

Faced with the same issues of these other countries where the provision of mass education suddenly was moved high on the agenda, Giliomee highlights the position where there “was too little money, and too few teachers and classrooms” (Gilomee, 2009: 191). Whilst, as he continues, there is an obvious tendency in the literature to judge the issue almost “purely in terms of interracial equity and fairness” Bantu Education can also be measured in terms of its political and economic objectives foregrounded by apartheid policy. Thus the exception was employed to normalise a political order that actively excluded the majority of its citizens to its social and economic margins by including them within that state of exception.

Giliomee describes Verwoerd as a ‘moderniser’ who was “inspired by the experiments with social engineering that he had first encountered on a visit to the United States” further adding that “as a politician he tried to reconcile the determination of the white minority to retain its political supremacy with the social and economic requirements of a rapidly industrialising society” (Gilomee, 2009: 192). Here what begins to become evident is the way that state power penetrates the very bodies and forms of life of its subjects. What emerges then in the political realm of such a modern totalitarian state is Foucault’s theory of biopolitics where the bare life of a citizen is what is at stake within the state of exception. Furthering this observation Agamben suggests:

> In particular, the triumph and development of capitalism would not have been possible, from this perspective, without the disciplinary control achieved by the new biopower, which through a series of appropriate technologies, so to speak created the 'docile bodies' that it needed (Agamben, 1998: 10).

Whilst the United Party government under Smuts had made some attempts to improve the portion of the budget dedicated to black education it had nevertheless failed to bring the system under state control. In the wake of this Giliomee notes that Verwoerd "representing a party even more conservative than the UP (United Party)" was faced with the task of "persuading white taxpayers to shoulder the burden of educating a group four times more numerous than itself at a point where they themselves still only enjoyed a fairly rudimentary education" (Giliomee, 2009: 191).

Another constraint to understanding the act is the assumption that its pedagogic and political assumptions remained the same over time. Instead Giliomee notes that their is a distinct break in how the policy was implemented in its first stage and how it took shape in the 1970's when the department's focus shifted to more stringently regulating secondary education. Whilst inequalities in the distribution of funding and resources remained vast throughout its implementation, it was the issue of language, specifically the use of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in examinable subjects that consolidated active resistance by both scholars and parents and teachers alike to Bantu Education.[11]

At this point it is important to note the provisions made in the act which read: "To provide for the transfer of the administration and control of native education from the several provincial administrations to the Government of the Union, and for matters incidental thereto" (1953: 258). Here the administrative body earmarked to legislate this act wasn't the Department of Education but rather the Department of Native Affairs thus illustrating racial exceptionalism. This act made specific provisions giving the minister exceptional power to determine the medium of instruction in schools. Whilst the Act dealt largely with the bureaucratic functions of regulating

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[11] Average annual state expenditure per pupil in 1975 - 76 was R42 for Africans and R644 for whites. In 1972, African teachers earned "46 percent of the salaries paid to whites in similar posts with similar qualifications. Kane-Berman, J.(1978). *Soweto: Black Revolt, White Reaction*. Raven Press, Johannesburg. p. 187.

funds, teachers and curricula, this single clause would prove to be the most divisive and account for how the state of exception comes to compressed in the Ledger.

Formally instituted only in 1974 by the Minister of Bantu Education M.C. Botha, the Afrikaans Medium Decree acted upon this clause making Afrikaans a compulsory medium of instruction in examinable subjects from grade 7 onwards. Whilst it took some time to be filtered through to the school administration bodies, Afrikaans was to be official phased in as the primary medium of instruction in African schools in the Southern Transvaal region from the beginning of the school year in 1975 (Karis and Gerhart, 1997: 163).

Thomas Karis and Gail Gerhart (1997) suggest that this shift in policy occurred when the Prime Minister at the time, John Vorster, together with National Party pragmatists:

> tried to appease part *verkramptes* (ultra-conservatives) who were unhappy about what they condemned as moves toward "liberalisation," including the government's acceptance of racially mixed sports and its long delayed decision to introduce television - a step that white conservatives feared would strengthen the dominant position of English over Afrikaans in popular culture. (Karis and Gerhart, 1997: 163).

In a Regional Circular from the Department of Bantu Education issued by Regional Director of the Northern Transvaal J.G. Erasmus addressed to Circuit Inspectors in 1974, the policy is outlined as follows:

> 1. It has been decided that for the sake of uniformity English and Afrikaans will be used as media of instruction in our schools on a 50-50 basis as follows:
>
> 2.Std V, Form I and II...
>
> 2.1. English medium: General Science, Practical Subjects (Home craft-Needlework-Wood- and Metalwork-Art-Agricultural Science)
>
> 2.2 Afrikaans medium: Mathematics, Arithmetic, Social Studies
>
> 2.3 Mother Tongue: Religion Instruction, Music, Physical Culture
>
> The prescribed medium for these subject must be used as from January 1975.
>
> In 1976 the secondary schools will continue using the same medium for these subjects.[12]

[12] "Regional Circular Bantu Education" Northern Transvaal (No. 4) File 6.8.3. of 17.10.1974

The attitude of the department officials in passing this decree betrays the lack of consultation and empathy with the concerned stake holders. The Deputy Minister of Bantu Education, Punt Janson was quoted as saying “No, I have not consulted the African people on the language issue and I'm not going to. An African might find that ‘the big boss’ only spoke Afrikaans or only spoke English. It would be to his advantage to know both languages”. With another official quoted as saying: “If students are not happy, they should stay away from school since attendance is not compulsory for Africans” (Ndlovu, 2007: 332).

What this illustrates is that at the core of the Bantu Education Act was bare life. As the apartheid state had established the legal parameters for the inclusion of its subjects into the political order (based on racial exceptionalism), they could as easily be excluded from it. To understand the Ledger’s first life as being a concentration of the bare life, the next section will examine the Soweto Uprising and the subsequent Cillié Commission of Inquiry to contextualise how the state of exception defines the legal and political mechanisms of apartheid.

6. Bureaucracy as Political Violence

The growing dissatisfaction around the implementation of Afrikaans as the primary medium of instruction in black schools came to a tipping point on June 16th, 1976 when a march by school pupils was organised to take place in Soweto. Boycotts of classes had already been a feature of the school year and this march was planned to incorporate the majority of schools in the area.

The march was planned along the following route; three streams that would converge were scheduled to start from the Morris Isaacson High School, the Naledi High School and the Sekano-Ntoane High Shcool with pupils from other schools joining in en route. The march was scheduled to pass the Orlando West High School on its way to the Orlando Stadium from which they were to commence as a large body to the offices of the education inspectorate in Booysens to hand over an ultimatum on the use of Afrikaans (Ndlovu, 2007: 341-2).

The police and parents of the pupils reportedly were largely unaware of the plans for the protest, and thus were unprepared for the events that followed. Whilst the estimates vary, it is reported that by 9 o'clock on the morning of June 16th, the march numbered approximately ten thousand students (Simbao, 2007: 51). En-route to Orlando Stadium the marchers were confronted by the police outside Orlando West High School. The police contingent led by the commander of the Orlando police station, Colonel Kleingeld numbered only 48. Armed with revolvers, automatic weapons, tear gas as well as riot batons and dogs, they confronted the crowd in an attempt to disperse the march which was deemed to be illegal.[13] The confrontation quickly turned violent with shots being fired into the crowd. In this initial attempt by the police to quell the march two pupils were killed, Hastings Ndlovu and Hector Pieterson (Simbao, 2007: 52-3).

By noon word of the police brutality had spread throughout Soweto and the violence escalated into the afternoon. The official record for the number of those who died on June 16th is put at 11 with another 93 people being shot dead by police in Soweto over the next two days (Ndlovu, 2007: 342). However the violence was not contained to Soweto alone, spreading in the days following June 16th to schools Alexandra and Katlehong.

To understand how these events have a bearing on the first life of the Ledger it is worthwhile to note that as a death inquest register it is an accumulated record of all the deaths (unnatural due to their violent nature) that occurred during this period. Yet to look at the Ledger alone without a fuller context on the nature of the individual inquest that it reference reveals only a partial picture of the bare life it contains. That context can be found in the Cillié Commission of Inquiry.

Fully titled 'Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Riots at Soweto and Elsewhere *from the* 16th of June to the 28th February 1977' the findings of the Commission, headed by the Judge President of the Transvaal Provincial Division, Mr

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[13] According to the state no permission had been sought for a public gathering, hence the march was seen as illegal in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act, No. 17 of 1956.

Justice Petrus Malan Cillié, were only published in 1980, nearly four years after June 16th, 1976.[14]

The report from the Commission functions as a state sanctioned interpretation of the events that led to the loss of life at the hands of the police that began with the Soweto Uprising on June 16th, 1976. With the Ledger and the Cillié commission, we are faced with two primary sources of the apartheid archive. However, the ideological frame in which the interpretation of the chronology the Commission traces is characterised by the attempt to politically normalise the exceptional nature of the way apartheid policies were enforced.

Nevertheless, the contents of the Commission can be used to decipher the information in the Ledger which, as an accumulation of names and dates and reference numbers, is somewhat cryptic without reference to the individual details of the inquests it records. The Cillié Commission therefore offers a context to some of the names contained in the Ledger. As a document it reveals the extent of political manufacturing that the apartheid state had in order to try and legitimate the state of exception.
The Soweto Uprising and the violence that ensued was a period of political crisis for the apartheid government. Here it is worth recalling Agamben's definition of the exception;

> ..if exceptional measures are the results of periods of political crisis and, as such, must be understood on political not juridico-constitutional grounds, then they find themselves in the paradoxical position of being juridical measures that cannot be understood in legal terms, and the state of exception appears as the legal form of what cannot have legal form (Agamben, 2007: 1).

This process becomes evident when using the Cillié Commission to decipher the Ledger. The first half of the report involves a whitewashed interpretation of events that generally absolves the police of any accountability for the loss of life that

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[14] Following the prescriptions of a piece of legislation titled the Commissions Act, No 8 of 1947, which is described in order "To make provisions for conferring certain powers on commissions by the Governor-General for the purpose of investigating matters of public concern, and to provide for matters incidental thereto"

occurred on and after the Soweto Uprising. This account of the events, as the state interpreted them, illustrates an attempt neutralise the state of exception by justifying the police's actions as an attempt to "maintain law and order" (Cillié, 1980: 102). Reporting on the first violent confrontation between pupils and the police, the Commission states:

> As the march had advanced a long way by the time police realised what was happening, it was their duty to stop and disperse the crowds. Depending on circumstances, they would be entitled to make use of a reasonable means to restore peace. Again, it is futile to speculate on what would have happened had the police not acted. They did act, the scholars were dispersed, and the riots broke out (Cillié, 1980: 106).

This illustrates the paradoxical position of the state of exception which manifests itself as the legal suspension of the law in order to maintain law and order. As Ian Baucom suggests "...the state of exception classically entangles justice and violence, suspending the peacetime application of the rule of law and setting in its place a space for sovereignly sanctioned state violence" (Baucom, 2005: 186). The fact that the Cillié Commission exonerated the police from any wrong doing comes to reinforce it as an apparatus of the state of exception of apartheid.

Whilst the first half of the Commission's report can be used to form a contextual basis to understand the Ledger, a more direct comparison can be found in the final section titled 'Annexure F'. This section is titled "Persons Killed by the Police" and relates to the cases in the Ledger were the police were involved in the unnatural deaths recorded. The section is broken into four categories; Personal Particulars, Medical Jurisprudence Particulars, Legal Particulars and finally Factual Particulars. Each category carries its own subsections which are laid out as follows (see fig. 3. overleaf):

6.8 SOWETO.

6.8.1 PERSONS KILLED BY THE POLICE.

Personal particulars			Medical jurisprudence particulars	Legal particulars	Factual particulars
(a) Name;	(b) race, sex and age;	date and place of (c) injury and/or (d) death;	(e) post-mortem number; (f) cause of death; (g) further particulars;	(h) inquest number; (i) finding; (j) further particulars;	(k) circumstances;
(a) AMATENDE, Elisa;	(b) Black female, 21 years;	(c) 76.09.17 Maretha; (d) 76.09.18 Leratong Hospital, Krugersdorp;	(e) 767/76; (f) gunshot wound in stomach; (g) -	(h) 56/77 Krugersdorp; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) the deceased was shot in a house near the Mapetla Secondary School during rioting at the aforementioned school.
(a) BARRON, James;	(b) Black male, 28 years;	(c) Area 6, Meadowlands; (d) 76.06.18, Soweto;	(e) 2672/76; (f) gunshot wound; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) circumstances not known.
(a) BOGALE, Meshack;	(b) Black male, 18 years;	(c) - (d) 76.08.26 Leratong Hospital, Krugersdorp;	(e) 714/76; (f) gunshot wound in head; (g) -	(h) 49/77; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) the deceased was killed by the SAP during the rioting.
(a) BUTHELEZI, alias Nkosi, Elliot;	(b) Black male, 27 years;	(c) - (d) 76.06.16 Soweto;	(e) 2467/76; (f) gunshot wounds; (g) concentration of alcohol in blood was 0,13 gm per 100 ml;	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) circumstances not known. The body of the deceased was taken to the Orlando Police Station by an unknown person.

Figure 3: Cillié Commission of Inquiry - Annexure F: p. 34

i. Personal Particulars;

(a) Name;

(b) Race, sex and age;

(c) date and place of Injury and/or

(d) Death;

ii. Medical Jurisprudence Particulars;

(e) Post-mortem number;

(f) Cause of death;

(g) Further particulars

iii. Legal Particulars

(h) Inquest number;

(i) Finding;

(j) Further particulars

iv. Factual Particulars

(k) Circumstances;

To illustrate how the bare life recorded in the Ledger can be read as corresponding to the state of exception represented by the Cillié Commission, a comparison can be made between these two sources. As Agamben describes, the state of exception is a "point of imbalance between public law and political fact" (Agamben, 2007: 5). In this sense then, the Ledger can be considered as a form of public law which requires that unnatural deaths be investigated. In light of the findings of the Commission it can said to represent political fact that exonerates the state of any culpability for the instances it was involved in. For Agamben the state of exception is situated "like civil war, insurrection and resistance - in an ambiguous, borderline fringe, at the intersection of the legal and the political" (Agamben, 2007: 1).

To see how this relationship between the legal and political plays itself out in a comparison between the Ledger and 'Annexure F' from the Commission's report, it is worth bearing in mind a final quote from Agamben that can be applied to the way the

apartheid government incorporated bare life into its legal structures in order to politically legitimate the murder of its subjects. Agamben suggests;

> ...if the law employs the exception - that is the suspension of the law itself - as its original means of referring to and encompassing life, then a theory of the state of exception is the preliminary condition for any definition of the relation that binds and, at the same time, abandons the living being into law (2007:1).

The entries in 'Annexure F' on the Cillié Commission are only those case which occurred during the widespread violence that occurred on and after the Soweto Uprising. The Ledger does not only record these cases but all inquests into unnatural deaths from the year 1976. Nevertheless, during the period that the Commission spans there is a concentration of corresponding entries in the Ledger.

As the entries in the Ledger are largely indecipherable it is necessary to examine 'Annexure F' to illustrate how the state of exception can be seen in the state's legal recourse. As already mentioned two of the first deaths on the morning of June 16th were Hastings Ndlovu and Hector Pieterson. Whilst the first half of the Commission gives an account of these deaths mentioning them by name, 'Annexure F' presents a more thorough record of the inquests findings that occurred as a result of police violence.

To illustrate how the Ledger and the Commission can be seen as an account of the same event, the Soweto Uprising. Here I refer to the section 6.8.1 (Soweto - Persons Killed by the Police) beginning on page 34 of Annexure F (see appendix 1). In alphabetical order its lists those who died in Soweto on June 16th, 1976. From a reading of the detail as it is laid out in the above sections it is possible to make the following reconstructions of cases from the June 16th, 1976 (written as 76.06.16).

On the first page (Cillié, 1980, Annexure F: 34), Nkozsi Buthelezi (alias Eliot), a 27 year-old black male was killed by gunshot wounds in Soweto. His post-mortem number is 2467/76. His inquest number is 1371/76. According to the further particulars under medical jurisprudence his has a blood alcohol concentration of 0.13

gm per 100 ml. The finding under Legal Particulars states that “liability cannot be determined”. Under the last section of Factual Particulars states “circumstances not known. The body of the deceased was taken to Orlando Police Station by an unknown person”.

The entry for the case of Vincent Mokena, (Cillié, 1980: Annexure F: 49), who also died on 76.06.16 is perhaps even more alarming because of the age of the deceased. Mokena, killed by multiple gunshot wounds, was 11 years old. His postmortem number was 2471/76. His inquest number was 1371/76 which is the same as Buthelezi’s. His Legal Particulars simply state that “liability cannot be determined” with no further additions.

Hastings Ndlovu’s entry (Cillié, 1980, Annexure F: 54) states that he was a 17 year-old black male that died in Soweto also 76.06.16. He died from a gunshot wound in the head and his postmortem number is 2487/76. He also has the same inquest number as the above two cases. The finding differs slightly stating “no person is liable” rather than stating that liability cannot be determined. This is perhaps because the identity of Ndlovu’s killer was known but that its admissible by the state. The factual particulars further aid this assertion reading “the deceased was killed by the SAP while attacking them and inciting a crowd of stone-throwers”.

Hector Pieterson’s entry (Cillié, 1980, Annexure F: 59) records him as black male of twelve years old with the place of injury being recorded as Orlando West High School and the place of death being recorded as Phomolong Clinic on the same day; 76.06.16. His postmortem number is 2492/76 with the medical jurisprudence stating that he died from a “gunshot wound - entry right side of back; exit wound in neck”. The inquest number is again the same as the above mentioned cases together with the reoccurring “liability cannot be determined”. The factual Particulars read “the deceased was shot dead by police during a confrontation in front of the Orlando West Secondary School”.

Conclusion

Whilst the records in the Ledger are not limited to the Soweto Uprising, it is nevertheless the concentration of names from this period that come to define its first life. As the individual inquest files relating to the entries in the Ledger have been presumably been destroyed, the Cillié Commission helps to bring context to the defining event that it documents.

Here, at the threshold of between the legal and the political, where the state of exception finds its form and bare life can be seen as the condition by which the apartheid defined its subjects. Agamben presents a useful insight that can be applied to this comparison between the ledger and the report from the Commission when he suggests that "at once excluding bare life from and capturing it within the political order", the state of exception constitutes the foundation on which the entire political system rested (Agamben, 1998: 13).

As the borders between a natural life and a political life become blurred and bare life is what is at stake in the calculations of state power, it becomes "both subject and object of the conflicts of the political order" (Agamben, 1998: 13). The first life of the Ledger reveals this process whereby the inquests it records become the foundation of the state of exception within the apartheid state.

This comes into focus more clearly when considering how the Cillié Commission can be used in order to decipher the Ledger and make sense of the bureaucratic processes it represents. More so, these bureaucratic process reveal, as much as they attempt to mask, the violent extent to which the apartheid state would go to enforce its exceptional policies of segregation as the death of its subjects is condoned and they become objects within the political order.

The next chapter will consider the second life of the Ledger where a name of a subject emerges from the Ledger and consequently shrouds the others beneath a veil of commemoration that erodes subjectivity, becoming a process of active forgetting.

Chapter 2 - Second Life

Introduction

This chapter will discuss the second life of the Ledger by introducing two intersecting biographies with its overarching biographical narrative. The two biographies that make up the Ledger's second life are intertwined thus invest its second life with discursive capital. Beginning by illustrating how the Ledger, as an archival fragment of apartheid, addresses other narratives, this chapter will focus on how such narratives are subject to change and reinterpretation as their ideological position shifts according to other political and social developments in South Africa. Here what will be discussed is how these two narratives frame the construction of commemoration in post-apartheid South Africa.

The two biographies or intersecting plots that I refer to concern two names; Hector Pieterson and Sam Nzima. Pieterson's name, as noted in the previous chapter, is recorded in the Ledger. The relationship of that name to Sam Nzima's is not textual but rather visual and occurs through a photograph of Pieterson taken moments after he was shot by the police on June 16th, 1976. Appearing as two caveats in the broader biography of the Ledger, these narratives open up the discussion to a theoretical examination around the different ways that the archive is used in the construction of memory. This will draw specific attention to the way that the photographic archive is deployed and sits as a hierarchal point of departure for interpretation.

The first section Other Voices connects these two narratives by firstly identifying the textual trace of the record of Pieterson's name contained in the Ledger. Then exterior to the Ledger but connected to the record of this name is another archival trace; the photograph of Hector Pieterson's death by taken by Sam Nzima. This introduces a hierarchal disparity between fragments of the textual and visual archive, where the visual functions to link the textual to the present. In such a way the textual fragment of Pieterson's name resonates through the Ledger through the external visual trace of the moment captured in Nzima's photograph.

Section two, Archival Tension: Narratives and Biographies will then identify the conflict that emerges in the way that the archive is used to construct memory through the disparity of its visual and textual forms. Locating an archival scepticism that emerges between these two types of forms, the proceeding section From Index to Icon will examine how the role of photography in the construction of social memory and how an archival hierarchy is established between.

Following this line of thought section four, The Press and the First Person will examine other archival traces from June 1976 to look at how Nzima's photograph was used in conjunction to reports from the press at the time to construct the narrative around Pieterson's death that would propel him to a central figure in the way memory of the events from this period have been constructed.

The final section, The Choreography of Memory: The Myth of June 16th, 1976, will bring these discussions together to discuss how the archival hierarchy between image and text functions in the way commemorative memory has been constructed in post-apartheid South Africa. Concluding is an account of how Nzima's image of Pieterson, when seen in the context of the tradition of documentary photography during apartheid, has resulted in the case studies of those who also died during the Soweto Uprising and are also recorded in the Ledger and the Cillié Commission become eclipsed by the memory of Pieterson in the wake of Nzima's photographic image.

1. Other Voices

Outlining what gives the Ledger its biographical currency in its second life it is necessary to interrogate the multiple voices and histories that it conjures. Following the basic premise of biography, the previous chapter examined the Ledger's first life as a primary historical source of apartheid bureaucracy. Beginning its second life in this biography of the Ledger, another biography presents itself. A single name emerges from all the rest of the records contained in the Ledger; Hector Pieterson (see fig. 4 overleaf).



Figure 4. Sam Nzima. The first in a series of six photographs of Hector Pieterson taken on June 16th, 1976.

Whilst Pieterson's name speaks louder than the rest in the Ledger's second life, at first glance through the list of names his is however ordinary. There is nothing immediately exceptional about this record of Pieterson apart from a red R in the right hand side margin indicating death by rioting. Yet in many other instances this is also the case. Here Pieterson is merely a name among many others, a record of an inquest into an unnatural and violent death.

Yet it is Pieterson's name that begins the Ledger's second life and connects it to the present. The reason for this begins not with Pieterson himself but with a photograph taken by Sam Nzima in the seconds before his death, after he was shot during the Soweto Uprising on June 16th, 1976. The biography of this photograph enables an exploration of how the commemoration of Pieterson has resulted in a disconnection from the past of which the Ledger's first life is emblematic. In this regard the photograph bridges the textual trace of Pieterson's name to the present through the visibility it gives to the textual account of his death found in the Ledger.

In South African history the date June 16th 1976 widely recalls Hector Pieterson's name. It is more than just his name that comes to mind; it is a photograph taken by Sam Nzima of Pieterson's dying body being carried by Mbuyisa Makhubu. The photograph is in black and white. Running alongside Makhubu is Pieterson's distraught sister, Antoinette. Both she and her brother are in their school uniforms. Mbuyisa is wearing dungarees. A trickle of blood comes from Pieterson's mouth. He was hit in the right hand side of his back by a bullet that exited his neck fired by members of the South African Police. He was 12 years old.

This photograph, published later the same day on the front page of *The World*, has come to define what June 16th 1976, and by proxy the liberation struggle, represents in the South African imagination after apartheid. At this stage it is what consequently connects the Ledger to the present. In such a way Pieterson's name and more so Nzima's photograph connected to that name, has been propelled to iconic status with his death coming to epitomise the resistance struggle against apartheid. As Gary Baines has noted "thirty years on (and in absentia) Pieterson enjoys the stature of the

most widely known name associated with the struggle of the generation of 1976 against apartheid" (Baines, 2007: 284).

This photograph is therefore principal reason for the resonance of Pieterson's presence in the Ledger, and in turn the symbolic capital of the Ledger itself. On it also hinges more elaborate questions about the processes of remembering and commemorating the loss of life during apartheid. Conversely what the image also represents is a certain disconnection and decontextualisation from the past. By isolating a singularity and allowing it to speak for an entire body of collective experience, the memorialisation of the events of June 16th 1976 occur through the interpretation of a single narrative created by Nzima's photograph. The next section will then discuss and unpack the complexities around how these two archival fragments of Pieterson's death, one textual and the other visual, have come to occupy a hierarchal place in the construction of contemporary memory.

2. Archival Tension: Biographies and Narratives

At this point it is important to state that whilst the names of those killed during this period of violence are recorded in the Ledger what is of interest here is the name of Hector Pieterson, for he serves as a fundamental connection of an historical event (namely the Soweto Uprising of June 16th, 1976) to contemporary memory and commemoration of that event. It is difficult to privilege the loss of a singular life over any other, especially when the dead are minors. However in the construction of how the events of June 16th have been commemorated, Pieterson has been elevated to a iconic status that has come to symbolise the struggle of the youth and their resistance against apartheid, thus effectively disconnecting a wider history from how memory in the present is constructed.

The connection of the Ledger to the present is arguably centred around Sam Nzima's photograph. Nzima was working as a photo-journalist for *The World* newspaper where the image was reprinted on the front page in the late edition on the same day and quickly disseminated. Therefore to extend the scope of this investigation into the Ledger a second biography of another object emerges; the Nzima photograph itself.

What an examination of this photograph brings into question is the dialogue between the narrative construction of history and memory through the indexical role that photography plays in such a formulation.

What this also raises is the ideological role that the archive plays in such a construction. Far from being static record of events the archive can be seen as playing an active part in the codification of memory. In his text *Archives and Justice: A South African Perspective* (2007), Verne Harris suggests that "while it is self-evident that the record is a product of process, it must be acknowledged that process is fundamentally shaped by the record, or more precisely, by the act of recording" (Harris, 2007: 13). This conceptual shift in Harris' provocation is useful when considering the Nzima photograph's relationship to the Ledger.

The photograph, or the 'visual record' as it can be regarded in this instance, is not only a product of its process – a journalist covering the front-lines of apartheid violence – but shapes the process itself. With the immediacy of its dissemination, the photograph quickly made visible the extent of the apartheid governments violent execution of its policies.

The Ledger, on the other hand, is also a record of the same events but from a different perspective. Textual, rather than visual, it represents a fragment of apartheid state bureaucracy listing the names of its victims. Here the dialogue between history and memory becomes apparent through what is presented in these two archival traces; a singular visual record depicting an isolated event and a much larger, albeit silent, record listing all the names of the dead of that particular period.

What this comparison draws attention to is the role that photography plays in shaping the way the archive is deployed through selective interpretation in the construction of memory. The Nzima image was quickly adopted by the liberation struggle as a banner under which Pieterson can be regarded as the metonymic poster child. Seen in the context of the Ledger, Pieterson's name is one of many who died in the uprisings, yet when set against the context of the photograph, he becomes elevated to the rank of an unwitting martyr who, protesting an unjust education system, was the victim of a wrongful death at the hands of his persecutors.

Jane Taylor raises a useful point regarding this observation that goes to illustrate the historical objective of the "archival impulse" (Foster, 2004: 5). What emerges in Taylor's description is the tension inherent in the role of the archive as a place of preservation for the sake of evaluative interpretation. For her, archives;

> …reinforce a philosophical hierarchy, in which the truth claims of various interpretations can be tested through reference to the real. Documents and objects are preserved, in part, in order to challenge interpretation. It is thus the nature of the archive that it conceals its own role as a place of evaluation, selection and exclusion. Archives in this sense must trust material traces while remaining sceptical about interpretation (Taylor, 2002: 245).

This scepticism that Taylor sees as an inherent, albeit discreet, function of the archive can be seen in the conflicting narratives that emerge between the elevation of the photograph to iconic status and the textual trace of other historic sources such as the Ledger. Here the mechanisations of social memory, which have adopted Nzima's photograph as iconic can be set against other material traces such as the Ledger in order to reinsert scepticism about such interpretative models.

What must then be considered is the role that photography played in the service of the struggle, and more broadly how its service is weighted more to favour the construction of memory rather than to history. However what cannot be denied, in lieu of Harris' earlier observation, is the active role that photographic practice had in giving a visible form and thus shaping resistance to apartheid. Similarly Paula Horta (2011) frames this as the construction of a photographic vocabulary of resistance when she suggests that:

> Photography of different genres – photojournalism, social and political documentary – provided the language which best gave form to and represented the experience of apartheid. These *photographies* played a crucial role in denouncing the cruelties, injustices and brutal violence of a system that trampled on fundamental human rights, thereby raising individual and collective consciousnesses, and compelling spectators to vehemently oppose the South African government and demand socio-political change" (Horta, 2011: 31).

Whilst the photograph of Pieterson illustrates a single story that can be considered to epitomise a much larger narrative, the Ledger conversely provides a comprehensive

record (as far as that is possible) in its material trace of the event that provides a different kind of contextualising gravity to an interpretation of Nzima's photograph. Yet, as a visual testimony replete with its own vocabulary, the photographic index lends itself to 'the real' more so than any other visual or textual representation because of the supposed nature of photographic fidelity.

The ability of the camera to record what the eye sees has implications for how the photograph is deployed in the codification of collective memory. The viewer's interpretation is also further aided by what we are told about the image; captions reveal a considerable amount of information that provides context about the event they depict. Conversely they also conceal a certain amount of information and thus give room for evaluative interpretation.

Proximity to the event also has its consequences for interpretation. Printed the same day of the event what is seen is an instant of apartheid violence; on the front page of *The World* newspaper is the black and white photograph showing the limp body of a child, barley in his teens, in school uniform being carried in the arms of an older boy not yet in his twenties.

Here the caption is important; reading "The school-kid killed in today's riot is carried away from the scene of the disturbances. At the time of going to press he had not yet been identified" (*The World,* 1976a: 1). Pieterson was not immediately identified as the victim, nor were the identities of Makhubu or Pieterson's sister mentioned in the days following June 16th. However, as the events of Pieterson's death began to be distilled and mediated through the press around the world, the names of those in the photograph gathered significance as the impact of the image began to be felt.

In South Africa today the Pieterson photograph has been used in the construction of a foundational myth of post-apartheid South Africa that is based around how the struggle against apartheid has been narrated, remembered and defined. Applying the lens of Judith Keilbach's methodological observations in her paper 'Photographs, Symbolic Images, and the Holocaust: On the (im)Possibility of Depicting Historical Truth' (2009), if we are to assume that the repertoire of images depicting both apartheid and the resistance to its policies of segregation range up into the tens of

thousands, then what is revealed is that the images that have come to define that period of South Africa's history are nevertheless comparatively small.

Instead the same few pictures are remembered because of how they have been continuously reproduced, mediated and recycled. The reasons for such photographs coming to constitute a collective social memory of this particular historical period can be found in, amongst other things, their availability, their aesthetic quality in relationship to the event they depict, but most importantly in the fact that enable an adaption of interpretation; they provoke a metonymic action in the collective memory that effectively erases other images by propelling them to iconic status. In such a way only a marginal selection of photographs have become an itinerant part of the history they represent.

Extending this line of thought Keilbach asks to "what extent these photographs, which have been transformed into symbolic images through their repeated use, are able to depict or convey 'the' historical truth" (Keilbach, 2009: 55). The next section will discuss how the indexical function of the photograph comes to elevate such images as the purveyors of memory. Reconstructing a circumstance or event of which the viewer might have had no experience at face value, they seem like "an extraordinarily suitable medium for history" (Keilbach, 2009: 57). However this is not necessarily the case because a historical understanding of events does not rely on a single mediated image but a contextual understanding of a multiplicity of representations in order to narrate a chronology.

3. From Index to Icon

Textual and comprehensive, rather than singular and visual, the Ledger is a different kind of material fragment to Nzima's photograph due to the fact that it, like the Cillié Commission of Inquiry presents a more thorough and comprehensive record of the inquiry of unnatural deaths from that region in 1976. As a part of the apartheid governments system of record keeping, it represents the bureaucratic procedures that run parallel to the violence perpetrated in order to uphold its segregative laws. Thus to

a certain extent it is a list of the victims of its policies made in order to follow up and investigate cases of wrongful death.

As an archive in and of itself, what it summons is the textual trace and accounts of death experienced during this period in apartheid history. Here Pieterson exists only as a name among many others who died; a single entry in a long list with case numbers and court details that function as a way of keeping an account or an index of apartheid's victims. Yet when a comparing the role of this source to that played by Nzima's image of Pieterson in the construction of commemorative memory of the period of June 1976, it can be suggested that although the archive of apartheid is full of many different kinds of textual traces, central to its construction is the visual representation that is embodied by the photograph.

Here the discursive intention is to investigate how the symbolic investment in the narrative produced by Nzima's photograph as a result of its iconic status can be suggested to effectively silence, or at least reduce, the impact of other images and textual traces that relate to this period. What seems necessary then is to clarify how the photographic index functions in connection to other kinds of textual and archival traces. Perhaps more importantly in light of Taylor's call to scepticism, what also needs to be queried is how the photograph's iconic status can effectively disconnect it from similar kinds images, records and indexes.

At the beginning of her text, *On Photography*, Susan Sontag alludes to the indexical function of photographic images when she suggests that; "Photographs furnish evidence. Something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we're shown a photograph of it" with the photograph passing for "incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened" (Sontag, 1979: 5). In such a way because of the material mechanisms inherent in their construction, photographs represent an authority over the world

through their truth claim or fidelity to the event that they record. In such a way this represents what has come to be known as their indexical function.[15]

The function of the photographic index is to encompass the relationship of the photograph to the event or object that it depicts. Tom Gunning illustrates the material nature of this process when he explains that "the indexicality of the photograph depends on a physical relation between the object photographed and the image finally created. The image on the photographic negative derives from the transformation of light sensitive emulsion caused by light reflecting off the object photographed filtered through the lens and diaphragm" (Gunning, 2004: 40).

In this line of logic then photographs are, quite literally, to extend Sontag's formulation, "not so much statements about the world but pieces of it". Furthermore, as an index of the world, they are "experience captured" (Sontag, 1979: 8). Because of the mechanical processes that occur in their production, the fidelity to the event they depict is very often seemingly indisputable. However, despite the shady commerce "between art and truth" that occurs behind the lens of the camera, in the moment when the photographer makes his selection of the frame, what is of immediate concern to this study is not the choice of that frame made by the photographer but what occurs after, in the mediation and reproduction of the image.

This concern bases itself around how people relate to and consequently treat the image and the effect it has in the construction of a historical narrative. Here the photograph acts as the indexical marker or frame for how a particular event is remembered. As the photograph is mediated, reinterpreted and reproduced, it becomes inscribed with a particular meaning and association. As in the case of the Nzima image, the photograph becomes contextually associated to a certain interpretation of events thus providing a narrative account of those events.

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[15] The notion of the photograph's 'indexical function' can be traced to the work of American philosopher and mathematician Charles Pierce's who interest in semiotics saw him elaborate a theory of the 'Trichotomy of Signs'. The idea of the index comes from the second of these formulations where it is placed in a conceptual triad; icon, index and symbol. See Lefebvre, M. "The Art of Pointing. On Peirce, Indexicality, and Photographic Images" in Photography Theory (The Art Seminar, II), James Elkins (Ed.), New York: Routledge, 2007.

What is interesting in this case is how this specific photograph has both connections to the history contained in the Ledger but more importantly how, through its iconic status, Nzima's photograph of Pieterson functions to disconnect such a history from other images and archival traces that depict the same series of events. Apart from the other images that it stands in place of, the photograph also effectively silences the material traces of the others who died during the uprising; by subsuming them into its own narrative. In this way the photographic index disconnects a historical interpretation of the past from/in the present due to the investment in its status as an icon of the struggle against apartheid. To examine how this process occurred the next section will examine the biography of the photograph and more specifically the narrative that occurred as a result of its mediation.

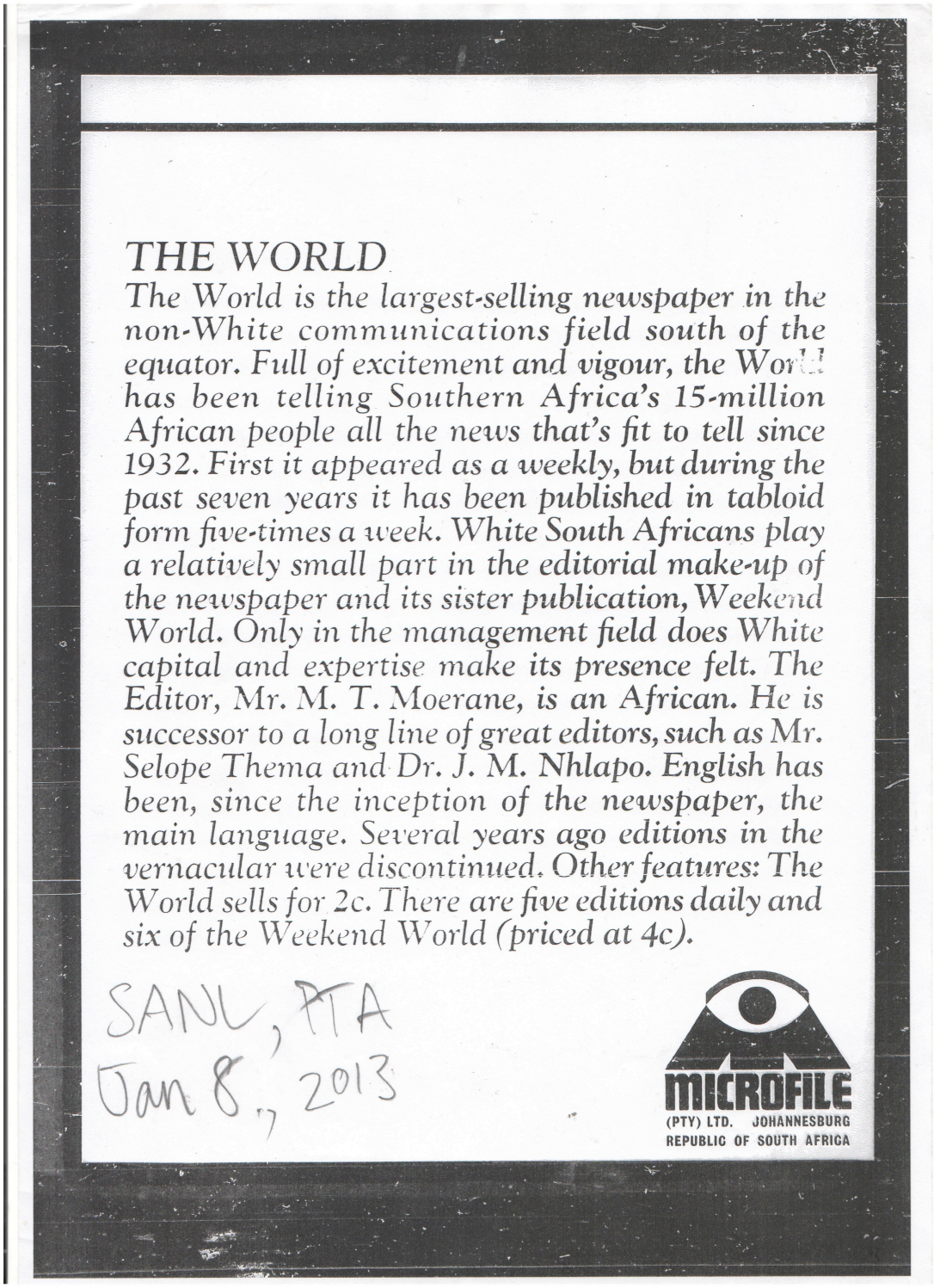
4. The Press and the First Person

Nzima's image of Pieterson carries its own biography that runs alongside a broader history of those others who died during the course of events in June 1976. This biographical narrative takes the form of a chronology that begins in the pages of *The World* newspaper (see fig. 5 overleaf).[16] As the site of the first reproduction of the Nzima photograph, what this biographical trace reveals is the tension that exists between a visual representation and textual accounts of the same events. This tension exposes how such kinds of visual representations become iconic through the frequency of their reproduction and thus effectively come to silence the memory contained in other textual traces.

The biography of this image begins the day before the uprising of Wednesday the 16th took place and runs till the weekend edition of the newspaper when Pieterson was finally identified by name and buried. In order to explore how the disconnection from other sources functions it is necessary, in the spirit of Taylor, to trust and investigate other material traces in order to remain sceptical about the dominant modes of interpretation and dissemination of the Nzima image of Hector Pieterson.

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[16] *The World* was established in 1932 and banned in 1977. It was started again as The World was established in 1932 and banned in 1977. It was started again as *The Post*, which was again banned in 1980. It was finally resurrected as *The Sowetan*.



THE WORLD

The World is the largest-selling newspaper in the non-White communications field south of the equator. Full of excitement and vigour, the World has been telling Southern Africa's 15-million African people all the news that's fit to tell since 1932. First it appeared as a weekly, but during the past seven years it has been published in tabloid form five-times a week. White South Africans play a relatively small part in the editorial make-up of the newspaper and its sister publication, Weekend World. Only in the management field does White capital and expertise make its presence felt. The Editor, Mr. M. T. Moerane, is an African. He is successor to a long line of great editors, such as Mr. Selope Thema and Dr. J. M. Nhlapo. English has been, since the inception of the newspaper, the main language. Several years ago editions in the vernacular were discontinued. Other features: The World sells for 2c. There are five editions daily and six of the Weekend World (priced at 4c).

SANL, PTA
Jan 8, 2013

MICROFILE
(PTY) LTD. JOHANNESBURG
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Figure 5. Microfile description of *The World*.

Taking into account the broader historical mediation of events around the Soweto uprisings provides a wider social perspective to the time of Nzima's image. This contextualising narrative therefore forms an important caveat to a discussion of how social memory in post-apartheid South Africa is constructed because it illustrates how remembering is in fact bound to a process of forgetting.

By examining the connections of Pieterson and the Ledger to the events as they were commentated upon at the time, what is illustrated is how memory today, defined by the iconic image, has come to be disconnected from 'the real' (or historical) chronology of events.

The World was published in tabloid form five times a week with five daily editions (see appendix 2). *The Weekend World* was published in broadsheet form and had up to as many as six editions per run. Published in English, after abandoning editions in vernacular languages, the paper described itself as reaching fifteen million of Southern Africa's *African* people. (see illustration). At the time, because of the censorship laws of the apartheid state, reportage of events came with considerable constraints, however and needless to say *The World* was partisan to the resistance struggle.

As an examination of the first site of reproduction of Sam Nzima's photograph, this narrative provides a connection of Pieterson to the Ledger because it illustrates the indexical currency invested that the photograph has to connect the past to the present. However, by drawing attention to the other various and conflicting biographies that this site of mediation and reproduction also conjures, what can be seen is how the construction of collective social memory in the present serves also to disconnect them from the past. This is because the image of Pieterson has come to be seen as the constitutive predicate for an entry point into the archive of images that depict the struggle against apartheid.

In the sense that different biographies provide an impression of a time that details the various events, happenings and changes that occurred, tracing the archival thread of a newspaper gives provides a far wider contextualising narrative than any single image can do so, thus giving historic veracity to interpretation.

On June 15th, the day before what has come to be known as the Soweto uprising, the late edition of the paper ran a cover story with the headline "Language Row – Grim UBC Warning". (Bokala, *The World:* 1976a, 1). Whilst the issue of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in schools had already received much coverage in the paper before this headline, the contents of the story that followed was startlingly prescient.

In the story by Willie Bokala, councillor Leonard Mosala is reported to have warned the Soweto Urban Bantu Council (UBC) that enforcing Afrikaans as a medium of instruction could lead to another Sharpeville massacre.[17] Obviously aware of the march intended for the following day his point couldn't have been closer to the truth. On page 5 (Bokala, *The World*: 1976a, 5) the same journalist reports on how the meeting eventually broke down with a dispute between the members of the council and the representative from the department of Bantu Education, Mr W.C. Akerman.

The cover of the late edition the following day echoed councillor Mosala's tragic prediction (see fig. 6 overleaf). Beneath the headline "4 Dead, 11 Hurt as Kids Riot" ran Nzima's image (Staff Reporter *The World*: 1976b: 1).The image was to be reprinted several times over the following weeks coming to define what John Peffer (2010) describes as the 'extra-photographic moment'. For Peffer the 'extra-photographic' is located in single pictures that come to define an entire repertoire. As he notes, because of the "the multiple embodied expressions of these complex images" the locality of the extraphotographic is found when it comes "back into singular objects made in specific moments in history" (Peffer, 2010).

As already mentioned the first caption to the Nzima's picture didn't mention the names of any of its subjects. What the story did indicate is how the circumstances escalated to the point where the police took action against the marching pupils leading to it being termed a riot. Listing the number of students at more than 10 000 the report

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[17] After a march to a police station by workers protesting the carrying of pass-books and minimum wages a group of about 400 police, outnumbered and skittish, fired 4000 rounds of ammunition into the crowd killing 69 people. The government quickly declared a state of emergency nine days later where executive powers were given to the police to maintain law and order. Lifted on the 31 August that same year these executive powers allowed the state to detain suspects without trial for an indefinite period of time. For a fuller account of Sharpeville see Philip Frankel. 2001. *An Ordinary Atrocity: Sharpeville and Its Massacre*. (New Haven, Yale University Press).



THE WORLD

5c OUR OWN, OUR ONLY PAPER WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 1976 EXTRA LATE

Students clench their fists in the "Black Power" salute as they march through Soweto streets.

4 DEAD, 11 HURT AS KIDS RIOT

Police clash with protest marchers

AT LEAST four people are reported dead and 14 injured in Soweto today when police clashed with some 10 000 schoolkids who marched through the streets of the townships, protesting against being taught certain subjects in schools through the medium of Afrikaans.

One of the dead is a student and an other an old man, who died from a stray bullet.

A policeman was also reported to be dead and a White motorist, who was stabbed to death. His car was stoned and set alight.

Among the injured were a student who was shot in the leg and another, with a bullet wound in his back.

Police and schoolkids clashed near the Nelle Higher Primary School, Orlando West.

A White motorist passing was stoned, stabbed to death and his car set alight. Another White man's car was also set alight. He escaped with head injuries.

In Phefeni a police car was stoned and set alight but the Black police driver escaped uninjured.

About 300 police fired hundreds of rounds into the air as they tried to quell the riot as kids hurled stones at the police.

At the time the police opened fire more than one thousand more pupils from Naledi on the west of Soweto were still marching to join the rioting pupils.

Smashed

Many of the 50 police cars which raced to the scene of the riot had their windscreens smashed by the rampaging students.

More than 10 000 students from a number of Soweto schools staged a march this morning through the township, protesting against the teaching of certain subjects in schools through the medium of Afrikaans.

The march follows the strike by students in ju-

To Back Page

The schoolkid killed in today's riot in Soweto is carried away from the scene of the disturbances. At the time of going to press he had not yet been identified. (More pictures on Page 4).

Whites ordered out

ALL White officials of the West Rand Administration Board and White visitors to Soweto have been ordered out of the area for the day.

This was said in a radio message to all offices this morning after police warned that they would not be able to protect Whites in the area.

The White staff of the Jabulani State School, left the premises in a hurry during examinations after a similar warning.

The teachers were warned after a White school inspector had been assaulted near Morris Isaacson High School on his way to the Jabulani school. The rear windscreen of his car was smashed.

Foreman blasts Frazier — Page 3

SPECIAL OFFER
2 for the price of 1
45,72 cm Grocery
91,44 cm Kitchen Dresser by Afristeel
Both for R149
Dep. R16 and R7 monthly
Carnie's
61 Harrison Street (cor. Kerk St.) Johannesburg. — Tel. 838-3715/38

Figure 6. Front cover of *The World*, Wednesday, June 16th, 1976 (Late Edition).

estimates that some three hundred police had fired “hundreds of rounds into the air as they tried to quell the riot” (Staff Reporter, *The World*: 1976b, 1).

Continued on the back page, the story states that pupils from almost every school in Soweto joined in the protest, carrying placards that echoed the sentiments about Afrikaans being used as the medium of instruction. Whilst the story is a relatively impartial account of events two points here are interesting. On page four other photographs of the march were published that featured marching pupils and policemen brandishing weapons providing a further visual context. The reason this is worthy of a mention is because of the vocabulary of their content; like many of the other photographs in the press these images do not focus on any individuals but rather depict a larger body of pupils in various postures of protest.

Like Peffer’s notion of the extra-photographic, this is important because it differentiates the temporal singularity of Nzima’s image from the mass of pupils. Here the specific extra-photographic moment is for Peffer’s what remains outside the photograph and thus “determines its local identity”. Whilst Pieterson was not named in the initial publication of the Nzima photograph (in which coincidently neither was Nzima credited), the image differs from others of its kind due to its construction in the way it remains outside other images of its kind.

The image, when taken out of the context of its publication, tells the viewer relatively little about its surrounding circumstances. Instead there is a contained scene in which a distraught pupil (indicated by her school uniform) runs alongside a larger, also distressed, teenager carrying an injured pupil in his arms, highlighted by his limp body and trickle of blood coming from his mouth.

Yet, this image, which has come to define the iconic status of Pieterson’s death in the struggle, is one in a series of six that each provide a slightly different perspective of the same event. Four of the other five images are taken from a further distance and in the background depict the mass of marching students scattering due to police gunfire. The final two images in the series shows the trio getting into a VW Beetle owned by Sophie Tema, a journalist from *The World* who took Pieterson to Phefeni clinic where he was declared dead upon arrival. However, because the portrait composition of the

first image suited a newsprint layout, the photograph that tells the least about it broader context was the one reproduced.

In a way this very disconnection, or at least isolation from its surrounding context, can be said to be one of the reasons for its potency. Likened to a tragic interpretation of the Pieta by some commentators including Peffer, Simbao and Nadine Gordimer; Makhubu's head reaches the top of the frame with Antoinette's hand and Hector's head at either ends, completing the classical triangular composition of the image.[18] This simplicity aides in a certain disconnection that memory has to broader history because of the confinement of the tragedy to the pictorial plain. The viewer does not see the surround chaos but instead gets a singular impression of the extent of the violence enabling the photograph to be easily taken out of context.

Therefore although at the time of its first publication the subjects are anonymous, they are different because they are depicted alone. We can see neither their peers nor the police responsible for shooting Pieterson although the headline and caption indicates that they were there. Otherwise we know little about who they were, which school they were from, how old they were. When it was first published all that the caption to the photograph told us was; "The schoolkid killed in today's riot in Soweto is carried away from the scene of the disturbances. At the time of going to press he had not yet been identified" (*The World*: 1976b, 1). As mentioned already Nzima was not credited as the photographer. Yet because of the particularity of the subjects isolation in the photograph, the tragic desperation in their expressions and the limp body of the nameless victim, the viewer was able to see them apart from the masses; allowing a corporeal pause that focuses on a single moment of experience. This visual experience was to be repeated with the image being published several times over the following weeks.

In the days directly after the photograph was taken neither Pieterson, Nzima, Antoinette nor Makhubu were identified. Whilst the Uprising dominated the front

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[18] For these accounts see Simbao (2007) "The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Soweto Uprisings: Reading the Shadow in Sam Nzima's Iconic Photograph of Hector Pieterson". African Arts, vol.40, no. 2: (2007). pp 52 – 69 and Peffer, J. (2009). *Art and the End of Apartheid*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

pages of *The World* over the days proceeding the riots of June 16th a noteworthy story that begins to indicate the extent to which the photograph would be used to mediate the violence of the events was published on the 18th of June. In a narrow side column with the headline "Riot Hits Headlines" the story reads:

> London - The Soweto Riot details made the major news story in Britain yesterday. They were given splash front-page treatment in all but one of the eight national newspapers. The newspapers make powerful use of dramatic photographs, including the one of students carrying the body of a fellow student (Staff Reporter*, The World*, 1976c: 8).

Already the image had been published at least twice in different editions with variations of the headline "6 Die as Protests and Riots Explode" and "6 Die in Protest Horror". This short story illustrates the effect that the photograph would have in making Pieterson's death visible as the definitive moment of the Soweto uprising. Similarly, Tema's headline for the story published in the *Weekend World* of Sunday 29th June; "This is the Picture that Shocked the World" (*Weekend World,* 1976a: 1), suggests the impact the picture would continue to have in future on the way the struggle was to be defined and remembered. Not coincidently this reproduction and account was also the first time Nzima was credited.

This headline does more than just speak to the effect that the photograph would continue to have in the construction of social memory. What it does is to draw attention to *how* the image makes visible the atrocities of apartheid violence by stating its effect. "This is the Picture that Shocked the World" separates it from other images of its kind by emphasising the importance and the immediacy of the violence portrayed, thus coming to illustrate how the extra-photographic moment it represents allows it to stand outside other images through its iconic status. The image itself is violent, shock and despair fill the faces of Mbuyisa and Antoinette whilst the life drifts from Pieterson's body. At this stage in the mediation of the image Pieterson had still not yet been identified. Nevertheless it is an exceptional image that is differs from the rest; whilst there were many images that were constantly repeated and reprinted this photograph depicts the consequences of apartheid violence differently due to its singularity.

In such a way this kind of photograph reproduces a moment and connects the viewer to an event that we were might have not been personally involved in; what's more is that it enables the viewer to relive the moment over and over. Beyond that, it comprises part of the visual imagination that is shared with others; hence underwriting a mutual interpretation of certain events. This kind of visual impact on our memory and definition of the past is arguably what gives the photographic index its currency. This is because, as a historical index, the photograph is both immediate and instantaneous; with just a glance the viewer is transported back to relive the definitive moment repeatedly.

What is important to note here is that although this was the first time Nzima was credited with taking the photograph the identity of Pieterson was still not provided to the reader. It was not until nearly a month later when his funeral was announced that Pieterson was identified by name. After the leaders of the Black Parents Association had their plans to hold a mass burial denied by the Minister of Justice Jimmy Kruger (1976d: 1) Pieterson's funeral took place at St Paul's Anglican church on Saturday July 3rd.

The following day the headline in *The Weekend World* read "Soweto buries her dead". (*Weekend World*, 1976b: 1) The content of this story is important for understanding the impact that the picture had already made. After having permission a mass burial denied the Black Parents Association instead held a "symbolic funeral service for Hector Peterson (sic)". Describing him as the "13 year-old school boy who was believed to be the first person shot" in the demonstrations of June 16th the story is interesting because it notes the fact that Pieterson was among many others to have died in the violence. Written by Tema who had experience a first hand account of his death it notes that; "Hector is just one victim that will be buried today. More than 40 others will also be buried in different parts of the Witwatersrand" (Tema*, Weekend World* 1976b: 1)

Speaking at the service Dr Manas Buthelezi is quoted as saying;

> Indeed Hector's life has been rather short. The circumstances of his death is well known to all. We have gathered here, and our gathering symbolises the

> collective action of the people of Soweto to comfort and strengthen the families of the dead (*Weekend World* 1976c: 1).

What this reveals is the start of the process in which Pieterson was to continually be memorialised as a symbol of the struggle against apartheid. This is arguably because Nzima's photograph had been seen by so many in the days following the first uprisings and preceding the funeral. As Buthelezi continues "I have no doubt Hector's death will contribute to the betterment of his colleagues. Hector has lived for others, but he certainly did not live to see the fruit of his labour. But I am sure that others will see it and benefit therefrom" (*Weekend World* 1976c: 1).

These words, when considered in light of the effect that the immediate reproduction Nzima's photograph already had, begin to indicate the extent to which Pieterson would function as the metonymic poster child for the struggle. Although he was buried at St Luke's with ten other victims, his was the only name mentioned in the report. The article also mentions that messages of condolences and telegrams were read at the funeral from organisations from London, the United Nations Special Committee and SWAPO revealing the reach of Nzima's the photograph had gained in giving a visible character to the events of June 16th thus propelling the myth of Pieterson further.

This biographical account of the first site of mediation of Nzima's image is important because it lays the foundation for how the photograph would later be used in the construction of public memory. More specifically June 16th, 1976 and Pieterson's death would become intertwined, representing a symbolic turning point in the struggle against apartheid. Thus the extra-photographic moment discussed here stands outside other photographs that simply index the struggle. The next section shall move from the origins traced in this biographical account to further discuss the process whereby Pieterson, through the continued mediation of Nzima's image, became an icon of the struggle. It shall illustrate how memory is constructed not by the index but through iconic images that embody the vocabulary of that index.

5. The Choreography of Memory & The Myth of June 16, 1976

In *Les Lieux de* Memoire, Pierre Nora suggests that "modern memory is, above all archival. It relies on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" (Nora, 1989: 13). What is of concern here is how both the immediacy and visibility of a single image, the photograph of Pieterson by Nzima, has come to stand as a constitutive predicate for the post-apartheid archive of the struggle. Here the role that memory has played has meant that the symbolic entry point of the entire archive of images and accounts is reduced to a single photograph, or at least its context is read through the filter of a single image. As Nora continues

> The less memory is experienced from the inside the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs – hence the obsession with the archive that marks our age, attempting at once the complete conservation of the present as the total preservation of the past. Fear of rapid and final disappearance combines with anxiety about the meaning of the present and uncertainty about the future to give the most humble testimony, the most modest vestige, the potential dignity of the memorable (Nora, 1989: 13).

The "potential dignity of the memorable" here runs parallel to the mandate set by the social documentary photography that developed in South Africa during apartheid. It has also been argued that in fact the tradition of this kind of photography in a South African context ran parallel to the establishment of apartheid itself. Whilst social documentary photography has many precedents internationally, it was apartheid that created the impetus for a kind of documentary tradition that could lend symbolic and ideological weight to resistance.

It has also been suggested that the brutal realities of apartheid "changed the pictorial perception of the country from a purely colonial space based on racial segregation to a highly contested space based on the ideals of equality, democracy, and civil rights" (Enwezor, 2012). Curated by Okwui Enwezor and Rory Bester the exhibition *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid: the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life* (2012), at the International Centre of Photography goes to extensive lengths to address, as far as that is possible, the indexical repertoire of this specific genre of South African photography. Whilst an exhibition of this kind goes significant lengths to providing a

more contextually thorough view of the documentary oeuvre in South Africa during apartheid, the presence of Nzima's image of Pieterson still secures it as a defining example of the form in South African photography. This is perhaps because the image was mediated in such a way that it defined the process of resistance by making visible the human cost of the struggle.

Similarly Nora has observed that "what we call memory is in fact the gigantic and breathtaking storehouse of a material stock of what it would be impossible for us to remember, an unlimited repertoire of what might need to be recalled" (Nora, 1989: 14). There is simply too much to remember and thus certain iconic images, because of their enduring impact at an ideological level, come to act outward signs for the entire field of memory making.

Through its mediation what this image achieved was taking Pieterson from the anonymity experienced by so many of the other casualties to an icon of the struggle. Ruth Simboa reflects on the constant reproduction of this image when she asks what happens to the "memories of other students who were not framed by Nzima's lens?" (Simbao, 2007: 54). Going some way to address the effect that the image has had on silencing the memories of the other voices recorded in the Ledger, it also draws attention to the fact that the visual economy of the struggle was to be increasingly characterised by such shocking and powerful images.

However the vulnerability that such a violent visual economy has is the ability to neutralise its sensationalist currency. Simbao quotes Colin Richards to emphasise the vulnerability of such shocking images, when he, echoing Susan Sontag, suggests that;

> What they show can suffer from being seen too much. The forces that drive the production and consumption of sensational images often lead to overexposure, and through this, dulling feeling. Like the technically overexposed photograph, the scene pictured fades, an ever weakening version of the historical moment it captures (Richards in Simbao, 2007: 54).

What is interesting to note here is how the role of social documentary photography is not fixed but changes according the different modes in which the image finds itself deployed. The "ever-weakening version" of the historical moment then provides room

for reflection and reinterpretation; overexposure, in this instance has forced the reception and consumption of the photograph into different avenues marked by competing ideological agendas.[19] As an instrument of the struggle, the photograph embodied an epoch of violent protest and resistance by depicting the death of an innocent child. Illustrating the exceptional means of force that the apartheid government would use to maintain its status quo, this image was used to galvanise resistance both in South Africa and abroad. As Simbao further observes:

> As a cultural icon, Sam Nzima's photograph was, in the hands of anti-apartheid protestors, used as if it were an image of uncontested meaning. Small details and slightly different interpretations were in this context irrelevant, and it it for this reason that it succeeded in conveying a singular message (Simboa, 2007: 57).

But, as South Africa began to move closer to a democratic dispensation the mediation of the image in different platforms resulted in the competing agendas of its use and interpretation becoming more diverse and less discrete. Whilst it came unambiguously to mark an entire history of the struggle, as the political landscape of South Africa began to change so does it "register critical changes in the ways that these histories are not only remembered, but also continually reframed in the process of healing and commemoration" (Simboa, 2007: 52). Shifting from its incorporation in protest material of the 1980's which "purposefully flattened the image both literally and metaphorically" the photograph found new meaning as it became invested with a commemorative currency allied to a historical narrative of June 16, 1976 being a significant turning point in the struggle.

In 1992, as apartheid began to be dismantled, an outdoor memorial stone engraved with a likeness of Pieterson's face was erected not far from the site where he was shot in Orlando West. As a period of particular uncertainty, South Africa in 1992 was in the midst of negotiating its reconstruction as the new democratic dispensation approached. Telling are the words engraved on the face of the memorial; "In memory of Hector Pieterson and all other young heroes and heroines of our struggle who laid

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[19] See Ali Hlongwane. "Commemoration, Memory and Monuments in the Contested Language of Black Liberation: The South African Experience" *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol. 2, no. 4, June 2008.

down their lives for freedom, peace and democracy". By further mediating his representation as the point of entry into the memorialisation of the struggle, the story of Pieterson was symbolic of the Soweto Uprising with it later becoming "part of the triumphalist grand narrative of the liberation struggle, which is the foundation of the myth of the post-apartheid state" (Baines, 2007: 291).

Later in 1995, under the newly formed democratic dispensation, the South African government officially declared June 16th Youth Day in a bid to reinvest the struggle in with a nation-building rhetoric in the contemporary imagination. Whilst this day was celebrated prior to the official recognition of the anniversary of the uprising and Pieterson's death, the state sanctioned celebration in 1995 reveals how the photograph's mediation had shifted from a symbol of resistance to an icon of remembrance thus further entrenching the myth of Hector Pieterson and June 16th in the popular imagination.

Furthering reifying his status as a struggle hero the government in partnership with the heritage industry opened the Hector Pieterson Museum in 2002.[20] Located adjacent to where the memorial headstone was laid it is designed to appeal to a more generic audience with a almost life size replica of Nzima's photograph of Pieterson being placed behind the headstone. Using the register of Pieterson as its point of entry for commemorating the struggle, in this particular instance June 16th 1976, the museum reveals the full extent to which iconic photographs are used to construct myths.

Nzima wasn't the only photographer working in Soweto during this period. In marked contrast to the contribution made by photographers such as Alf Khumalo, Peter Magubane, Nzima's contribution to the social documentary oeuvre is minimal in comparison. When looking at the indexical trace of left by Magubane in his book title *The Fruit of Fear: June 16* (1984) the photograph of Pieterson seems almost common-place among the images of violence of chaos and death. In this way what collections such as this reveal is a more thorough impression of the realities of the

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[20] See Gary Baines, (2007). The Master Narratives of South Africa's Liberation Struggle: remembering and Forgetting June 16, 1976. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* vol. 40, no. 2.

time. Yet what is notable is the title of this collection *June 16*; on closer inspection many of the photographs are recorded as being taken on the 17th and in the days after. June 16th here becomes itself an iconographic date mythical in proportion to the images of devastating violence that followed.

However the question remains; why is the image of Pieterson still today read as the proxy for these kinds of photographs? How has the ideological use of the index allowed a specific memory to stand in for a broader history? Whilst there are criticisms that South African photographic practice towards the end of the 1980's became burdened by its own 'myopic literalism',[21] Nzima's image of Pieterson's death is an example where a singular photograph has come to define an entire period of work. It could be argued that the Pieterson image so encapsulated such an experience by constructing the myth of June 16th, that it is nevertheless given room through its singular and inflated indexical position, for a flexible interpretation of such a myth.

Here what becomes apparent is that the narrative construction of the resistance struggle becomes ideologically malleable when faced with the task of how to reconstruct a national identity that is informed by such a history. It is as if, following Richards earlier observation, the visual saturation of such images by the mechanisation's of cultural reproduction and its subsequent consumption have diluted the photographic index. Instead what we have in the place of an index is a single narrative which has subsumed the history it represents. Again this echoes Nora's observation that "[m]odern memory" in this context thus relies on "the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image", existing "only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs" (Nora, 1989: 13).

As it will be discussed in later, this has implications for the how the Ledger will be interpreted in its later lives. Hector Pieterson's name and more specifically the record of his name come to define its future status as an object which, as will be shown in the following chapters, is given a monetary value. Also given a cultural and symbolic

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[21] See Okwui Enwezor, 'Photography after the End of Documentary Realism: Zwelethu Mthethwa's Color Photographs' in Zwelethu Mthethwa (New York: Aperture, 2010), p. 101

value, it shall nevertheless be pointed out that the Ledger as an object is dominated by the record of Pieterson. Yet when seen in the context of the other entries discussed in Chapter One, the Ledger is a much more comprehensive document than the photographic index, documenting those in the margins of Pieterson's narrative. Nevertheless, because of the way that it has been put to use, the exteriority of the visual sign silences the interior textual traces of the Ledger, allowing them to be forgotten.

Conclusion

Photographic practice in apartheid South Africa provided a counter narrative to the invisibility that the white minority government sought to impose on the black experience. Segregation was intended to limit the black body to the borders of the white experience, to enforce an existence on the margins. As Jon Soske (2010) argues

> The Afrikaner propaganda apparatus, Afrikaner cultural establishment and sections of the academy, worked to normalise so-called separate development and refute the historic claims of the liberation movements. An entire media landscape depicted blacks as the beneficiaries and and willing collaborators of white trusteeship. Race infected every aspect of vision. A generation of photographers, many sympathetic to or active within the mass democratic movement, sought to challenge this visual regime by creating alternative photographic narratives (Soske, 2010: 4).

Whilst many of these narratives were "manichean, spectacular and brutal" in their commentary others also explored the 'quotidian and subaltern aspects' of everyday life under apartheid. However the legacy created by the specific genre of social documentary photography that the Nzima image of Pieterson has come to typify has come to define the presence of the struggle in the contemporary imagination.

As Nzima's photograph was published on the front page of *The World* Pieterson was long credited as the first to die on June 16th adding to his mythical status as the metonymic poster child of the struggle. However as time has passed and the events have been given fuller investigation and context, it emerged that the first student to die was Hastings Ndlovu who was deliberately killed by the police as he was identified as an agitator.

The account of his death is given in the Cillie report. To be dealt with in the following chapter it seems necessary to recount it here, as a means of introduction.

> The sergeant stated that he heard the others firing and saw the colonel firing a number of shots towards the crowd. He got up and drew his firearm. A Black man charged at him with a brick in his left hand and a kierie in his right hand. To beat off the attack, he fired straight at the man. The attacker fell down dead. Later, he identitified him at the mortuary. It was the 17-year-old Hastings Ndhlovu (Cillié, 1980: 118)
>
> (...)
>
> It is impossible to know how many were wounded by firearms in the course of the morning. What is certain, however, is that only two demonstrators died in the rioting of that morning, and that both were shot by the police. One of them was Hastings Ndhlovu... (Cillié, 1980: 120).

Other than a single portrait of him not much is known about Ndlovu's life. Still the single image is displayed in the Hector Pieterson Museum giving a contextual reading to the sequence of events. This seemingly insignificant contradiction makes explicit the role that the mediation of images plays in the construction of popular memory. In Hlongwane's (ed) book 'Soweto '76: reflections on the Liberation Struggles Commemorating the 30th Anniversary of June 16 1976' (2006) the author reflects on the process of the construction of popular social memory that differs from and effectively serves to silence the 'truth' when they reflect;

> To explore memory across generations is to explore the social relationships through which people build their politics of memory, identity and cultural expression. Hence all memory, whether collective or individual, is by nature selective and changeable. It is constantly evolving as a result of acts of remembering, forgetting or suppression…the portraits juxtaposed with the Nzima photograph point towards such moments of remembering, forgetting and even silencing allowing astute viewers to recognise the chiaroscuro of the portrayed events (cited in Simbao, 2007: 61).

Likewise Nora suggests that at the heart of this chiaroscuro of the portrayed events (those of June 16th 1976 and the struggle) is the fundamental opposition that occurs between history and memory. He elaborates by suggesting that;

> Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in

> its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past" (Nora, 1989. 12).

Bringing this observation back to the Ledger the conflict between the construction of memory and that of history becomes clear. The names of Hastings Ndlovu amongst the others that died on and after June 1976 fade in comparative obscurity when faced with the enormity of the legacy left behind by Nzima's image of Pieterson. Whilst photographs provide a didactic window into reconstructing and conflating the past what is at stake here is the way in which they have come to used in the effective silencing of other images and consequently, other memories. In post-apartheid South Africa the economy on which commemorative memory is constructed thus relies on a selective fetish that dwells upon the most atrocious images that forgo and forget the quotidian.

As the next chapter will discuss, the Ledger's survival can be attributed to this process, when it was chosen from a pile of other *doodsondersoeke registers* for its connection to Pieterson. Those were presumably destroyed, and we only have the record 1976 because it furnishes the myth developed by Sam Nzima's photograph.

Chapter 3 - Third Life

Introduction

This chapter examines the shift in the Ledger's status as an object that occurs in its third life. As the previous chapter discussed the connections the Ledger has to other narratives informed by the visual photographic index, this chapter extends that logic to examine why and how it survived.

Starting with the climate where apartheid was beginning to be dismantled and incriminating documents destroyed in a process of systematic forgetting, this will begin with a definition of the archive and why certain documents were destroyed. The next section 'Going Public: 1993' will move to look at the period when the Ledger was first seen in public thus surfacing mysteriously on an exhibition in the foyer of Wits University's theatre. It should be noted that due to the lack of concrete evidence much of this section is based on recollection and here-say and thus not verifiable. As one of the methodological challenges of this study this section makes accounts from primary sources from the period as best as it can to discuss the emergent material trace of the Ledger.

The next two sections, 'Biographical Shifts' and 'New Marks, New Meanings', will then discuss how the Ledger begins to move from a found object to Art Work, which signals the shift from its second life into its third. Its survival is largely attributable to the fact that because of the currency already generated by the status of Pieterson through Nzima's photography, the Ledger was not discarded. Instead it was selected for the 'outward sign' Pieterson of the date 1976 and appropriated into another biographical narrative belonging to the artist Kendell Geers.

Elevating the status of the object to an artwork, Geers declared the Ledger a readymade giving it the title of *Untitled 1976* (1993). The following section, From 'Found Object to Readymade' will examine this shift by discussing the historical

precedent of Marcel Duchamp's notion of the readymade in order to frame the biographical shift that defines the Ledger's third life. The following section, 'Authorial Nomination' then moves to examine the parameters of this encounter, illustrating why Geers' chose as he did.

The final two sections, 'The Stamp of Influence' and 'Exhibition - State of the Art' will examing the defining accounts of the Ledger's third life where Geers' investment turns the object into a commodity when it was sold to a museum. As the Ledger emerges through this process so it gathers with it a material trace of other documents and representations connected to it that allow the details of its biographical account to become clearer despite the obfuscation that comes from the two myths of Pieterson and Geers.

1. The Archival Impulse

Through the course of the following research it is not clear why the Ledger was not destroyed according to the schedule outlined on the disposal slip attached to its front cover. A possible a reason for this could be attributed to the state's poor records management systems that saw the supply chain of the destruction of records backlogged. As apartheid drew to a close an unfathomable amount of incriminating documents and records were destroyed at the order of the outgoing government (Harris, 2000: 31). Whilst the majority of the individual inquest files that the Ledger indexes were presumably incinerated, the Ledger itself remains as a accumulated record of these files despite the fact that it should have been destroyed in 1986. As such it is the final record of these files and names who can be considered victims of apartheid state violence.

This period from 1986, when it should have been destroyed according to the instruction D10 on the disposal slip, until its discovery in 1991 can be considered as the Ledger's transition into its third life, when its purpose changed and its use was reconfigured. As such its third life becomes framed by the erosion of the document as an archive. In order to explore this further it is necessary to briefly describe the

climate in which the destruction of records was part of the state apparatus of apartheid. As Verne Harris notes "under apartheid the terrain of social memory, as with all social space was a site of struggle" (Harris, 2000: 30).

In this space of "systematic forgetting engineered by the state", the disposal of records by its very nature is contrary to the archival impulse of collecting and gathering together pieces of information taken to have some historical importance. A useful definition of 'archive' provided by the Society of American Archivists defines the term as a noun to describe:

> 1. Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control; permanent records. - 2. The division within an organization responsible for maintaining the organization's records of enduring value. - 3. An organization that collects the records of individuals, families, or other organizations; a collecting archives. - 4. The professional discipline of administering such collections and organizations. - 5. The building (or portion thereof) housing archival collections. - 6. A published collection of scholarly papers, especially as a periodical.[22]

When it comes to state institutions tasked with the responsibility of fulfilling such a mandate, the archival impulse becomes a little more problematic given the scope and extent of public records under their jurisdiction. In many instances some records are to be kept for a date as stipulated by the archival legislation of the governing body after which they are to be destroyed. Again the Society of American Archivists provides a useful indication about how decisions are made as to how long records are to be kept before they are disposed of and destroyed. Defining a disposal date it reads:

> Disposal dates based on the date a record was created are often designed to batch records for disposal; for example, "destroy one year after the end of the fiscal year in which the records were created." Disposal dates may often be

[22] (Society of American Archivists, 2005: www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/archives).

> triggered by an event associated with the record; for example, disposal of contracts is often timed from the date the contract is completed.[23]

In the instance of the Ledger, on which the disposal code given (D 10) indicates that the document was to be kept for a period of ten years, after which it was to be destroyed. This is presumably because in the instance of an inquiry into an unnatural death no new information would present itself after such a period and thus it would be expedient for the state to destroy an index of such records (and not considered the contents of such records to have archival value). However, given the ideological policies of apartheid, the reason for the disposal of such records may well have deeper implications for how the state deliberately acted to censor such information that would later be seen as incriminating.

As Harris (2007) further notes, due to its positioning within the state apparatus of apartheid governance and ideology, the state archive service was largely cut off from active participation within a global discourse around archival practices. Coupled with this international isolation, at home the service was also greeted with mutual suspicion by institutions that were active in the field of social memory which meant that it was difficult to secure donations of private records from sources that were not aligned to the establishment. As a result the service, despite the intentions of "some individual archivists within the institution", was fashioned as a tool of the apartheid system (Harris, 2007: 176). A further result that complicated the role of the service was the fact that many powerful state organs obstructed its legitimate activities by "flagrantly ignoring or defying its legal instruments". In light of the apartheid systems general disregard for accountability and transparency, Harris gives three examples to illustrate the fraught position of the state archives enclosed by self-censorship as apartheid came to an end.

> Firstly, a number of government offices persistently refused to subject their record systems to design analysis and archival appraisal or to co-operate in the transfer of records into the service's custody. Secondly, from the 1980's numerous cases of unauthorized destruction of public records by government offices were documented and many more alleged. They pointed to a

[23] (Society of American Archivists, 2005: www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/d/disposal-date).

> systematic endeavor to secure a selective amnesia as the apartheid system crumbled. The service was singularly unsuccessful in opposing this or exposing the culprits. Thirdly, in the 1980's the service was forced by its political masters to withdraw open access to certain records within its custody...(which) in practice constituted only a minor infringement of public access to the records concerned. Nevertheless, this incident contributed to a perception of the service as a willing collaborator in state-imposed public amnesia (Harris, 2007: 176 - 177).

Harris provides a useful insight into the way the state engaged in the disposal of such records in his paper, 'They Should Have Destroyed More' (2000), where he states the "legal disposal of public records involved either their transfer into the custody of a State Archives Service repository or their destruction in terms of a disposal authority" (2000: 32). As he notes up until 1979 this was the responsibility of an Archives Commission set up in terms of the Archives Act No. 6 of 1962 of which Section 3(2) states that the director of the archive:

> (c) may inspect or cause to be inspected any archives and accessions in so far as such inspection may be necessary for the performance of his functions under this Act, and may with the approval of the commission authorize the destruction of any archives or accessions which, in his opinion, are of an ephemeral nature;
>
> [...]
>
> (e) may, with the approval of the Minister, granted after consultation with the commission, by donation, exchange or otherwise dispose of any archives or accessions in an archives depot or an intermediate depot which are redundant or unsuitable for any archives depot, to any librarian, museum or other body;

Yet with an amendment made to the Act in 1979 the Director of the Archives Service was given sole power to authorize such destruction without consultation of the Archives Commission. Harris notes the Act further made it a criminal offense to "willfully damage a public record, or to remove or destroy such a record otherwise than in terms of the Act or any other law". Yet as he further notes that "as with all national archives services, the State Archives Services was obliged by limited resources to select only a small portion of public records for archival preservation" (2000: 32). What is particularly telling is Harris' observation that state

secrecy ensured that the program surrounding this type of disposal and destruction was neither transparent nor accountable to the public and that the bodies that maintained it (such as the Commission and the Service itself) were reflective of the apartheid system being shaped by its authoritarian ideology.

In terms of the Ledger's survival, Harris again notes that efficacy in implementation is the most important test for powerful legal instruments. He states that in practice the State Archives Service was hampered by inadequate resources and its junior status in government structures with only a small portion of government offices being affectively reached by the Service's management program. This, combined with the state's disregard for accountability and the Director of the Archives' relatively junior ranking in the public service hierarchy, rendered the service almost powerless to resist state organs obstructing its legitimate activities and flagrantly ignoring and defying its legal instruments. Especially problematic were bodies located in the security establishment (whose) records systems were not subjected to professional supervision.

Somewhat incredibly the survival of the Ledger can possibly be attributed to this kind of malpractice or mere oversight where the state, in regards to the retention and destruction of records, was largely hampered by its own non-centralized attempts to dispose of sensitive information that would expose the extent to which apartheid ideology was enforced. It can also be suggested that the status of the Ledger as an index into inquiries of unnatural deaths was not regarded as containing information delicate enough for it to be promptly destroyed, whilst the state busied itself with the destruction of other more sensitive information such as the individual inquest files that the Ledger recorded. Perhaps as it was passed from office to office and bureaucrat to bureaucrat as various reports were being compiled, it was seen as a source of reference that was simply too valuable to be destroyed. Nevertheless, considering the significance of the historical period it chronicles, its survival allows a reflection on the way the past is understood in the present.

The State of Emergency twice came to characterize the South African political landscape; first in the 1960's and then in the 1980's. It is important to note the

similarities that occurred during these periods and how the narrative of the Ledger connects these together. The first state of emergency in South Africa was declared after police fired live ammunition on a large crowd protesting the carrying of pass books on the 21st of March 1960. Some estimates put the number of dead at 69 whilst others stretch into the hundreds. Declared nine days later on March 30 the state of emergency only came to an end six months later on August 31.

Although no state of emergency was declared in the wake of the widespread killing that occurred on and after June 16, 1976, the situation nevertheless carries the same hallmarks of the violent state response to protest action seen at Sharpeville. It is then with some coincidence that the second state of emergency to occur in the 1980's was declared on June 12 1986, just four days before the ten year anniversary of the Soweto Uprising of June 16, 1976.[24] Peculiarly then, in a government with a penchant for violently suppressing dissent and destroying the records of such violence, the Ledger was not destroyed. As Harris notes;

> The great majority of the records generated by the security establishment were classified and subject to the guidelines' provisions for destruction. In essence the guidelines obliged agency heads to destroy certain categories of record in the interests of security, and on the other gave discretionary powers to destroy records which had lost their usefulness. (Harris 2010: 5)

Why the Ledger was not subjected to these processes remains a mystery. It can only be presumed to have been placed in a supply chain behind other records regarded to be more delicate in nature. It can be speculated that because the Ledger did not contain classified information it was not destroyed more promptly, according to the instruction on the disposal slip. It could also be argued that as an index of all the inquest files it record, it was kept as a reference to make sure that they had all be destroyed. Furthermore in light of Harris' reflection that "by 1990 there was a well-established practice within state structures of routinely destroying classified records

[24] The first state of emergency declared in the 1980's occurred on the 20th July 1985 in response to the ANC's determination to render the townships "ungovernable" which saw widespread violence that targeted police and suspected informers.

outside the ambit of the Archives Act" (2010: 6), the Ledger's survival is even more surprising.

2. Going Public: 1993

In 1993 the Ledger, and other *doodsondersoeke registers* like it dating from different years surfaced from the destructive impulses of the apartheid regime, where they were used by Robert Weinek to construct a make-shift wall for an exhibition he was curating and installing at the Wits University Theatre. The exhibition which formed the visual component of the *Mail & Guardian* Film Festival titled 'Limits of Liberty' ran from the 25th to the 31st of July. In collaboration with the Anti-Censorship Action Group the goal of the festival was to "initiate public debate around censorship" with the aim of placing "the issue on the national political agenda" (Limits of Liberty Supplement', 1993: ii). (See fig. 7 overleaf).

As the festival's main impetus was primarily film, the exhibition functioned as a way of illustrating an artistic reaction to anti-censorship laws, showing transgressive material. In the festivals pull-out supplement from the *Weekly Mail,* the exhibition carries only a small description which reads:

> an exhibition of banned paintings, photographs, sculpture and resistance art will be on exhibition in the foyer of the Wits Theatre. The exhibition will include works by Paul Stopforth (Biko drawings), Michele Raubenheimer, Steven Cohen (Cardinals Cloak), Brett Murray, Dumile Feni, Robert Mappelthorpe, Sam Nhlengethwa, Kevin Brand, CJ Morkel and Alfred Thoba. Steve Hamilton-Barer's controversial photographs of a Sotho intiation ceremony, Gideon Mendel's picture of the AWB, Kevin Carter's photographs from the Sudan and Ellen Elmensdorp's Aids education pictures shot in Tzaneen will also be on display. The Mayibuye Centre of the University of the Western Cape will be presenting a selection of resistance art which will include banners, posters, T-shirts and videos. There will also be a display of books and publications declared undesirable over the years (Supplement to the *Weekly Mail* 'Limits of Liberty Supplement', July 1993: ii).



Supplement to THE WEEKLY MAIL, July 1993

MAIL & GUARDIAN FILM FESTIVAL

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ANTI-CENSORSHIP ACTION GROUP

INSIDE

- Full festival programme
- Details of all films to be shown
- Profiles of guest speakers and panel members

LIMITS OF LIBERTY

Shooting the projectionist

By LIZA KEY
Weekly Mail Film Festival director

IT has all been of course in the defence of Christian standards and civilised society. In the pursuit of those high ideals the arbiters of our morals, the Directorate of Publications, have banned the symbol of the internal anti-war movement, clothed bare legs in stocking packets, cut Louis Armstrong shaking Danny Kaye's hand in the *The Five Pennies*, banned Sean Slovo's film *A World Apart* for being "detrimental to the safety of the state" and restricted screenings of *Mapantsula* to white cinemas as they feared that "the film has the power to incite probable viewers to act violently".

By these acts of high-minded rectitude this small band of ideologically motivated men — and a few women — have struggled ceaselessly for 45 years to pervert South Africa's collective understanding of itself and the world around it.

Some years ago a journalist had occasion to interview a retiring chief censor and used the opportunity to pose a question which had long troubled him: "How have you been able to watch dirty films and read filthy books and magazines for so many years without yourself being depraved and corrupted?" To which the former chief censor replied: "Because I have good morals."

Now it is 1993 and time to leave these anachronistic and medieval attitudes behind us. No-one should be allowed to shout fire in a crowded cinema. But then no-one should be allowed to shoot the projectionist either.

Artists are society's watchers, critics and champions, says New York cartoonist Ted Weiss; they speak the unspeakable, even if it manifests itself in horrifying, untidy, or esoteric matters.

Society is concerned to protect the collective, but its interests are best served by the defence of the individual.

What are the limits of even the anti-censorship liberals? Do children need to be protected from the violence on our screens? Should free rein be given to racists and neo-fascists? Should the degradation of women in pornography be allowed?

LIMITS OF LIBERTY hopes to explore these and many other questions associated with censorship. As part of our conference we will be showing films and exhibiting works which the organisers would not necessarily defend on ground of good taste, or even artistic merit. But we are showing them to enable you to see what you have not been allowed to see and judge for yourself in the past.

We invite you to consider the story of censorship in South Africa during the apartheid years and join in the debate on the role of the moral arbiter in the new South Africa.

Festival film ... Milena Dravic, the ravishing sex reformer and radical, in a provocative pose, combining sex and politics in a scene from Dusan Makavejev's WR — Mysteries of the Organism

Figure 7. Mail & Guardian 'Limits of Liberty' Film Festival Supplement to the Weekly Mail, July 1993.

In the reviews that followed the festival mention of the exhibition rarely featured. However Sally Sampson (1993), a former examiner for the British Board for Film Classification, who was invited to participate on the panel discussions running parallel to the festival, gave a description of the show, writing;

> The foyer of the Witwatersrand University theatre displayed a provocative exhibition of censored books, magazines, dildoes, photographs and videos include clips of American hardcore, and audiences could have drinks under an enormous dominatrix semi-nude nun, straight out of one of the Spanish director Pedro Almodovar's films (Sampson, 1993: 2).

A colleague of Sampson, Marjorie Heins (1993), writing for *The Nation*, further described the climate of the festival by mentioning the exhibition in which she stated:

> But overall, the mood was one of elation, of new freedoms being flaunted. Along with other anti-censorship displays, a sex loop played over in the Wits Theatre Lobby, and many viewers seem transfixed by its novelty and clinical explicitness, if not its enduring artistic value. As one pundit said, it felt like a Prague Spring - even while the slaughter went on almost nightly in the neighbouring suburbs of Johannesburg (Heins, 1993: 279).

Here, the Ledger went largely unnoticed in amongst the other generally provocative material on display. When asked how he had come to be in possession of the Ledger and others like it, Weinek stated in two telephonic interviews conducted in 2012 and 2013, that he had found it at a dump in Newtown and that he returned the other documents to the dump after the exhibition (Weinek, 2012). Weinek stated that he used to frequent this dump since 1991 when he was working on an exhibition 'Urban Artefacts' at the Newtown Galleries in the Market Theatre precinct.

The Newtown Galleries were established in 1990 by Ricky Burnett. 'Urban Artifacts' Burnett described as his "version of a christmas show" (Burnett, 2013) in which the objects exhibited were framed by detritus picked up from the city thus framing the artworks in terms of the urban landscape. Weinek, who was working as a gallery assistant for Burnett at the time, recalls other objects/types of records obtained were reams of paper generated by heart rate monitors. As he recalls the sheets recorded

when the heart beat of a patient stopped and featured an official signature from a doctor to certify the time of death. Because his memory of the time is not very clear it is impossible to say precisely when Weinek found the Ledger; it is however reasonable to say that it was at any time between ‘’Urban Artefacts’ in 1991 and the ‘Limits of Liberty’ exhibition in 1993.

It can be noted that in the constructing the biography of the third life of the Ledger, Nora’s observation of the appearance of the trace is important. He notes that “with the appearance of the trace, of mediation, of distance, we are not in the realm of memory but of history” (Nora, 1997: 8). Characterising the shift into its third life is the Ledgers appearance as a material trace, when it is used and subsequently becomes visible. After 1993 the Ledger’s third life begins to take shape due to the fact it was later to be reproduced in an exhibition catalogue and bought and sold. These events are accompanied by peripheral pieces of documentation that are connected to the Ledger in some form or another. These other material traces connected to the Ledger provide a framework to begin to construct the narrative of its third life.

3. Biographical Shifts: Third Life

After the ‘Limits of Liberty’ exhibition the Ledger had a different course to the other *doodsondersoeke registers* dated from different years. Whilst Weinek stated that after the exhibition the other Ledgers were returned to the dump, the 1976 edition was not. Justifying returning the objects to the dump Weinek stated that they “were creepy to have around...all those names of dead people”.

Speaking more specifically about the Ledger from 1976 Weinek further added that; “(we) were aware of its significance due to the fact that it was dated 1976 and that dates relationship to Hector Pieterson, but none of us had the inclination or knew what to do with it”. Weinek then commented on possession, saying that “you cant own history” (Weinek, 2013).

These interview extracts recall the fundamental opposition which Nora sees between memory and history. As he suggests "memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive of the relative" (Nora, 1997: 9). The details of the Ledger have been up until now recalled through memory and constructed out of here-say. However, as its third life begins to take shape with the material trace becoming visible in other documents, it is possible to construct the next phase in the Ledger's biography.

It was here, either during the 'Limits of Liberty' exhibition or just after, before the other Ledgers were returned to the dump, that Weinek was approached by an artist Kendell Geers, who asked if he could have the *Doodsondersoeke Register* that was dated 1976. As Weinek recalls his response to request was "take it". It is important to mention that this establishes one of the foundational myths of the Ledger. This recollection or memory of the Ledger's transferral of ownership or indeed 'discovery', stands in opposition to the details that are later recorded in other documents connected to the Ledger that occur later defining its third life.

Geers, according to these documents, is recognised as having "found, picked up or discovered" the Ledger, retrieving it from a dump in Newtown. However Weinek, through the course of events described above, claims to have first discovered the Ledger and used it on the 'Limits of Liberty' exhibition in 1993 before he gave it to Geers. What mythologizes this course of events is that there is little material evidence, with the accounts from Weinek being made from memory.

When the Ledger moved into Geers' possession a shift in its third life occurred that moves it from the realm of memory to one of history. Found and repurposed by Weinek somewhere between 1991 and 1993 and then used as a structural object for the construction of a display platform on the 'Limits of Liberty' exhibition, in Geers' possession the Ledger became something different. With its contents subjected to a more complex reading its visibility was refocussed and its use altered.

4. New Marks, New Meanings

The rest of this chapter will discuss how the Ledger's third life would come to be defined by the presence of a familiar name as Geers' investment in and use of the object would rely on the currency generated by the mythological status of Hector Pieterson. As South Africa was in an uncertain period of reconstruction and narratives such as Pieterson and June 16th 1976 were being reconfigured and altered to suit the new ideological agenda of an emergent democratic South Africa, Geers' appropriation of the Ledger represents a point in the construction his own artistic myth around his relationship to the history of the apartheid regime.

To discuss the major shift in the Ledger's third life it is necessary to focus on the incorporation of Geers' own artistic narrative into its biography. This will examine the process of "authorial nomination" whereby his name would in the future become inextricably linked to the Ledger resulting from his action of physically altering the Ledger by adding his signature and a date. Declaring the object an artwork would in turn determine that the later material traces that reference the Ledger would be inextricably link it back to Geers. The discussion of rest of the Ledger's third life will then concentrate on the incorporation of this narrative by looking at the shift where the Ledger was appropriated by Geers as an artwork.

It is possible to fix a precise date on when this shift occurred because of two additions to the Ledger that have briefly been alluded to above. These additions come in the form of two stamps added by Geers (see fig. 8 overleaf). As will be argued these allow us to characterize the shift in the Ledger's third life as it moves from found object (by Weinek) to a readymade work of art by Geers. In order to describe the Ledger as a readymade artwork, given the title *Untitled 1976* (1993) by Geers, it is necessary to undertake another visual analysis of the Ledger in order to give context to how these two stamps affect a reading of the Ledger.

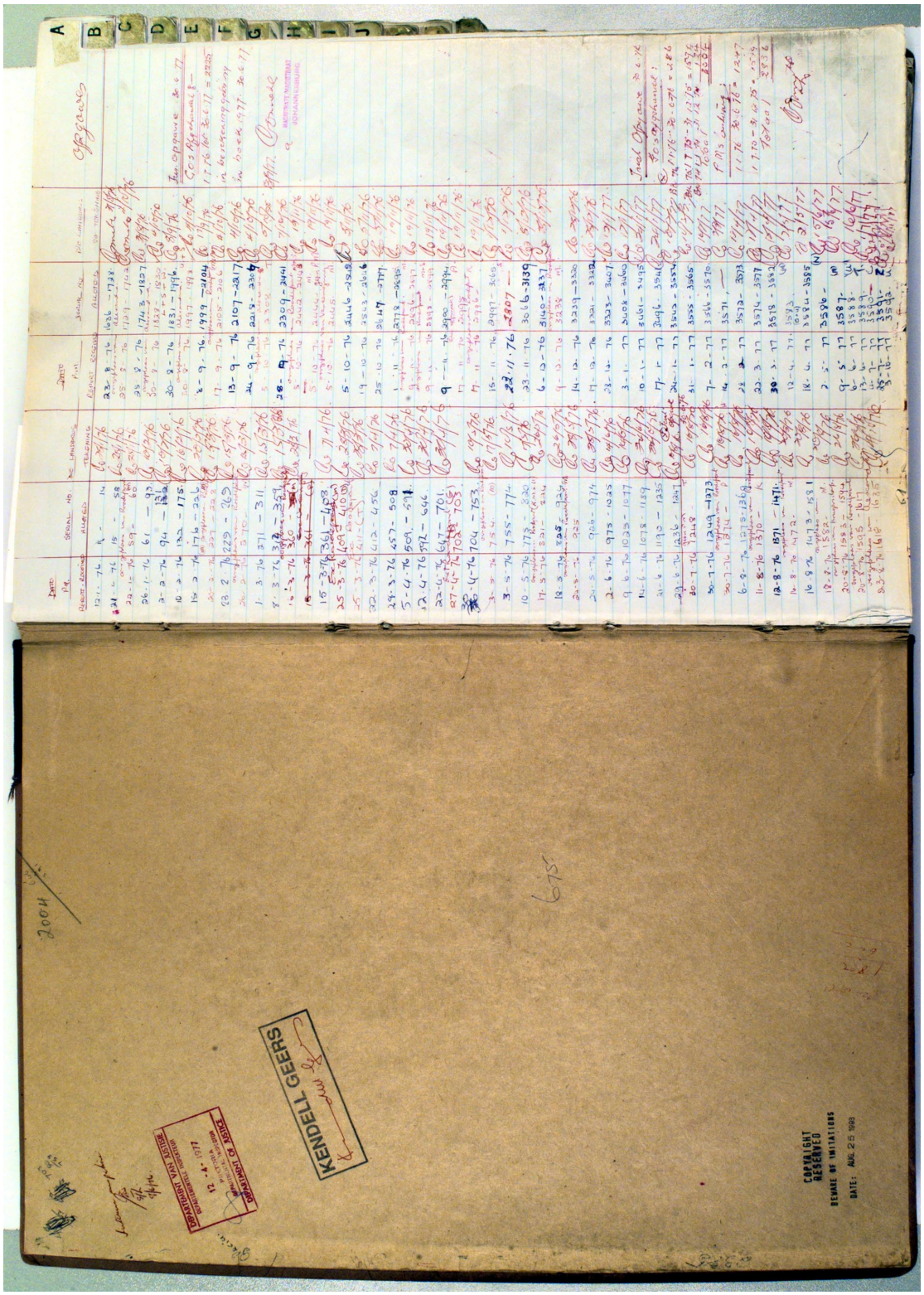


Figure 8. Inside front cover of 1976 *doodsondersoeke register* with two stamps added by Kendell Geers.

The document is a brown cotton bound ledger measuring 420mm x 300mm x 59mm. On its cover, written in thick black marker is the date: 1976. Beneath this, embossed, reads *Republiek van Suid-Afrika*, with the English translation below. Three quarters down the front cover there is a disposal slip or '*Beskikkingstrokie*' that has been stuck to the cover describing the ledger as a '*Doodsondersoeke Register*' (death inquest register). The slip details, in the first column, the period that the document covers (from the 2nd of January, 1976 to the 31st of December of the same year). In the next column, headed 'Directions as to Disposal' is the code 'D 10' with another date - 31/12/1986 - suggesting that 10 years after the twelve month period that the document chronicles it was to be destroyed.

The inside cover features a stamp in red ink belonging to the Inspector from the Department of Justice in Pretoria that is dated 12/4/1977 towards the top left of the inside page. Beneath the Department of Justice stamp, is the first additional stamp in black ink that reads Kendell Geers with his signature in red ball point pen in the borders of the frame. The next additional stamp, presumably added by Geers, this time without a frame, is on the bottom left of the page. It reads 'Copyright Reserved' on the first two lines, with 'Beware of Imitations' beneath on the second line. The last line indicates 'Date' which is followed by 'Aug 25 1993' (see detail figs. 9.1 & 9.2 overleaf). That the date is not aligned would suggest that this mark was made with a separate, adjustable date stamp like the kind used to issue books in a library.[25] Otherwise the Ledger is unaltered.

There is in fact little difference here between the Ledger as it was described in the first chapter of this study and the form that it takes here, save for the context that frames it as an artwork in the white cube. It is this context, however, that the stamps added by Geers seemingly give authority to the Ledger to be read as an art object.

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[25] There are also hand written notes in the margins of the page, mostly of numbers and an other officious signature above the stamp of the departmental inspector that is dated 9/6/1976.

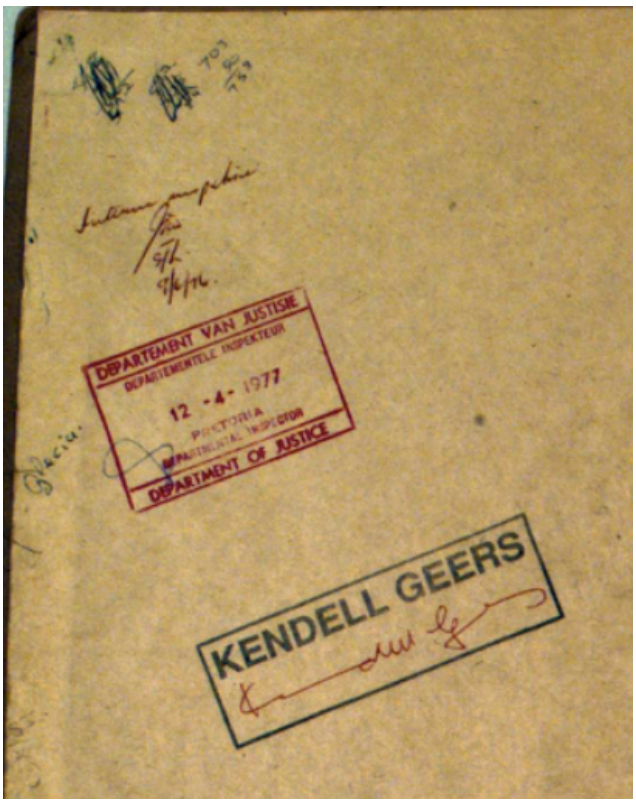


Figure 9.1 Detail of 'Kendell Geers' stamp and signature

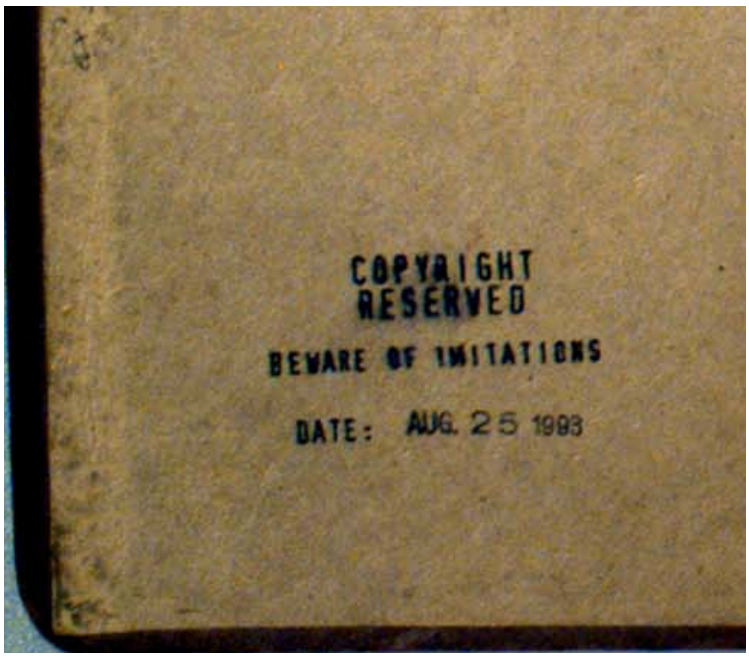


Figure 9.2 Detail of 'Copyright Reserved: Beware of Imitations' stamp dated 'Aug. 25 1993.

The next section will discuss this process by looking at the artistic practice where a found object turns into a readymade through the declaration by an artist that a specific object is an artwork. The process around this declaration will be referred to as authorial nomination whereby the artist becomes the 'author' or 'creator' of the object that allows it to be viewed within the context of an artwork.

5. From Found Object to Readymade

The shift of the Ledger from a found object to a readymade piece of artwork centers on these two stamps added by Geers. In what shall be described as his act of authorial nomination represented by the stamps, the Ledger turns from a found object into a readymade. The occurrence of this category of art consisting of the found object/ readymade at the beginning of the twentieth century brought with it a new vocabulary concerning what could be determined as artistic production. At its primary level what this new category of production brought was a break from the traditional media of painting and sculpture allowing new possibilities for what could constitute and be considered an artwork. Here there was a shift from an emphasis on the craftsmanship of the artist to the intellectual action that allowed objects to change their meaning through the declaration of authorial nomination made by the artist. As John Roberts (2007) explains in 'The Intangibilities of Form: Skill and Deskilling in Art After the Readymade';

> With the rise of the readymade there emerged an irreconcilable displacement of the link between handcraft and skill. This initiated a huge explosion in revolutionary thinking about the social form of art beyond the artisanal production of the conventional studio. As the artisanal became dissociated from the category of art, authorship came more and more to incorporate both the *non-artistic hands of others* and the development of mechanical/technical and executive artistic skills (Roberts, 2007: 2).

This lineage of the found object/readymade stretches back to the Dadaist movement and more specifically the work of Marcel Duchamp.[26] Margaret Iversen in *Readymade, Found Object, Photograph* (2004) quotes the surrealist Andre Breton

[26] For an in-depth study see Rosiland Krauss, 1971. 'Passages in Modern Sculpture'. *Forms of Readymade: Duchamp and Brancusi*, pp. 71 - 72. MIT Press.

who described the shift that resulted in a readymade by suggesting that they were "manufactured objects raised to the dignity of works of art through the choice of the artist" (cited in Iversen, 2004: 45). Although there are some predecessors that begin from 1913, arguably the most famous case occurred when Duchamp signed a urinal with the pseudonym 'R.Mutt' accompanied by the date 1917 in black ink.[27] Titled *Fountain* this was submitted to an exhibition held by the Society of Independent Artists in New York from where it was refused.[28] It was then photographed by Alfred Stieglitz and reproduced in the second (and final) edition of the Dadaist journal *The Blind Man*.

The editorial note in *The Blind Man*, 'The Richard Mutt Case', states that some of the grounds for the refusal of the artwork, as it was now referred to, were that it was seen as being "immoral and vulgar" and that it constituted plagiarism due to the fact that it was a "plain piece of plumbing".[29] The following editorial contention is important to reproduce fully here for it begins to contextualize the artistic action that this type of production aims to deploy. Appealing to the quotidian nature of the object, the note states:

> Now Mr. Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bathtub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see everyday in plumber's show windows. Whether Mr. Mutt with his own hands made the fountain is of no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view - created a new thought for that object. As for plumbing, that is absurd. The only works of art America has given her are her plumbing and her bridges (*The Blind Man*, 1917: 6).

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[27] Some of the first examples were a signed a bottle rack titled *Near Night* (1914) and a snow shovel titled *In Advance of a Broken Arm* (1915).

[28] Contrary to the submission guidelines which stated that any work submitted by an artist who had paid the six dollar submission fee would be displayed.

[29] Duchamp sat on the board on the Society of the Independents (the rest of which were unaware that he was behind the submission). He later resigned in protest over the exclusion of *Fountain* from the show.

It has been argued that this single action of selecting an everyday object and reinstating it with artistic merit called into question the aesthetic limits of an artwork. In this vein, citing Thierry de Duve, Iversen suggests that the readymade;

> can be seen as a limit case of the aesthetic...which forces us to reflect on the relation of art to the commodity, of the aesthetic to the appetitive. Its effect, its legacy for subsequent art, was to shift the artistic "discursive field" away from questions about aesthetic experience and toward questions about what constitutes a work of art. The readymade is a limit case that throws into sharp relief our deeply embedded expectations of a work of art. Need it involve craft? Is the signature of the artist or the work's location in a gallery sufficient enough to single out a object as art? Are aesthetic qualities important? Does a replica have the same value as the original work? Or does this distinction collapse in the face of the readymade? (Iversen, 2004: 47).

With questions such as these facing the definition of what constituted an artwork and how, the readymade took its currency in the form of a critique on the commodification of skill and originality of an art object. As Duchamp (1966) himself describes in a lecture titled *Apropos of Readymades*:

> Another aspect of the readymade is its lack of uniqueness...the replica of the readymade delivering the same message; in fact nearly every one of the readymades existing today is not an original in the conventional sense (Duchamp, 1966: 47).

The nomination then of the readymade occurred in what Duchamp described as a rendezvous with an object with Duchamp described as the "snapshot effect". de Duve describes the readymade as "born of the encounter of an object and an author. Object and author are nothing but the conditions of their encounter, nothing further being supposed about them. It is necessary and sufficient for them to exist to be able to meet (de Duve, 1994: 71). This encounter or rendezvous as Duchamp described it, is the necessary condition for the artist to inscribe the object with the condition of the declaration that it is now an artwork. Again, de Duve explains that the author:

> ...has no truth to declare, only a speech delivered on no matter what occasion but at such and such an hour. He or she is without any intention other than that of inscribing a readymade, of being on time for the meeting. Given an object

> and an author, it is thus sufficient that they have a rendezvous for a readymade to be able to be inscribed, in other words, for an ordinary object to be able to be written into the register of those things onto which the statement "This is art" is affixed (de Duve, 1994: 71).

6. Authorial Nomination

Against this backdrop of the break in convention regarding the production of an artwork where the artist is no longer required in its fabrication, so the notion of the author became destabilized and redefined. The artist was no longer the producer of an artwork in so much as he was to have physically constructed the object; instead, as a condition of the encounter between the artist and the object, now it was enough for him to be the author of the of the artwork without having made the object. As implied by the title given to this new form of production called "the readymade", the object "is an already-made object, and to admit it as an art object immediately leads one to eliminate the presupposition that the author has made the object with his or her own hands" (de Duve, 1994: 72).

According to Duchamp the rendezvous or encounter with the object by the artist who would designate it as art carries a set of conditions that have implications for our understanding of the shift from a found object to readymade. These will be examined in closer detail in accordance to the Ledger. The first condition is to specify a readymade; in other words to choose an object. The second condition; to inscribe a readymade, providing details as to the encounter. And lastly to sign a readymade thus finally issuing authorial nomination.

This has bearing for this study's consideration of the Ledger. Geers' rendezvous or encounter with the Ledger and the action of his choice inscription can be regarded as an act of authorial nomination where, through the inscription of his name in the form of stamping and signing the Ledger, the object now becomes an artwork. This action signals the shift from found object to readymade and has further ramifications for reading the Ledger in the context in which Geers declared the object as an artwork.

These ramifications lie in the choice of object that Geers decided to nominate as artwork. Duchamp constantly iterated throughout his correspondence and writings on the readymade that the choice or nomination of an object to the status of a readymade was that it should celebrate and uphold an anti-aesthetic sensibility which he described as being based on a "reaction of visual indifference" (Duchamp , 1966: 47). In this way the idea of the 'choice' has replaced the notion of fabrication as the guiding impetus for artistic production. However as it shall be discussed, the choice made by Geers' was not one of visual indifference at all, but rather one based on the already existing aesthetic qualities of the Ledger that are loaded with its own set of ideological significations.

To the first condition of the readymade; Duchamp was specific that the readymade should be approached with a type of "visual indifference". This criteria, or what Duchamp terms "precision optics" arrives with the contingency that:

> You have to approach something with an indifference, as if you had no aesthetic emotion. The choice of readymades is always based on visual indifference and, at the same time, on the total absence of good or bad taste. (Duchamp in de Duve, 1994: 72).

This would suggest that the first condition of the encounter is the object's election that is not based on any specific outward markers or signs. Yet as de Duve points notes "the author should not be accountable for it, if by 'author' one understands an intentionality, a taste, or a responsibility". In this way the "freedom of indifference" in the choice of a readymade becomes a guiding principle that would negate the authors aesthetic decision based on any kind of intention.

This, it seems, is contrary to the terms of Geers' choice in electing the Ledger as a readymade because its historical content would make such an choice seem both deliberate and intentional. With the date 1976 written clearly across the top of the Ledger's cover, and the details that indicate that it is a state document, and more specifically a death inquest register, the object, when seen closed as Geers exhibited

it, has a visual vocabulary that is loaded with ideological signifiers that connect it to a certain period of South Africa's history.

In terms of the second condition of the encounter (to inscribe a readymade) Duchamp adds "naturally inscribe that date, hour, minute, on the readymade as information". This would account for the presence of Geers' 'copyright reserved' inscription which details the date and when the Ledger shifted from a found object to a readymade. Yet the question remains as to the meaning of the assertion of the copyright stamp itself. As de Duve notes, just as the idea of an inscription replaces the idea of fabrication, so the inscription gives a proper name to the common noun designating the object.

A indication of what the intention of the stamp could be is perhaps located in the line of the stamp that reads 'Beware of Imitations'. This could address the notion of Geers' own authorial intentionality by playing on the fact that, because the Ledger is a unique, one of a kind object, an imitation would be impossible with only the action of such a declaration being open to alternate possibilities. By asserting his own authorial presence over the document, Geers' stamp can be seen as an attempt to incorporate the Ledger's narrative into his own artistic encounter with the object. Here Geers becomes part of the Ledgers biography through his stamp and subsequent declaration thus ensuring that any future considerations of the object would include his artistic nomination.

What problematizes this stamp further is the notion of Geers' inscribed authorship itself. By asserting copyright Geers is claiming an authorial nomination of an object that he has little authority over save for his encounter with it as a found object. Yet through this mode of inscription, more specifically the assertion of copyright, Geers' can be seen to be testing the limits of his authorial nomination to the point where it becomes paradoxical. Perhaps a point to consider is how the narrative of Pieterson embodied in the Ledger relates into Geers' artistic production in 1993; at a point where South Africa was experiencing accelerated yet uncertain political change as the parameters surrounding such narratives were shifting as they were being reinterpreted. As de Duve makes the point that already by 1913 Duchamp had asked himself the

question “Can one make works that are not works of ‘art’?” saying that “The readymade's author will object to his responsibility in vain, and the *objet-dard* [Duchamp’s pun on the term objet d’art] will oscillate ceaselessly from one aspect to the other of its double meaning in vain; one can't take back a slip of the tongue” (de Duve, 1994: 74).

In terms of the Ledger it can be suggested that Geers’ action is a deliberately testing of the representational possibilities of how the object could take on dual meanings. His own role in this thus suggests a certain culpability with the contents of the Ledger. As a newly instated author, perhaps Geers’ stamp suggests that he is allied to the official state narrative that the Ledger represents, with its presence in the secluded and rarified space of the white cube coming to cauterise the contents from any legal recourse.

Finally to the last condition of the encounter; to sign. This is the final inscriptive act that seals the process of authorial nomination moving the object out of its quotidian existence into the realm of the “*objet d ‘art*”. Here it must be noted that Duchamp himself signed his works with pseudonyms that displaced the accountability of the author himself. As de Duve points out:

> There, where the relation of the object to its title is reduced to *a kind of pictorial nominalism* and that of the object to its author to *a kind of rendezvous*, the name of the author is as contingent as that of the object. Duchamp never contested the recognized value of the signature; he never dismissed this reassuring guarantee of causality; he never fled responsibility. Rather, he objected to responsibility, which is not the same (de Duve, 1994: 75).

Geers’ stamp, on the other hand, which declares his authorship, in lieu of any fabrication of the object, does not object to responsibility but rather assumes and incorporates it as a condition of the rendezvous. Here, an indication of the paradox at the heart of this conundrum could be found in the title given by Geers to the Ledger in its form as an artwork. *Untitled 1976* (1993) is double edged in that it is both passive and active at the same time. Instead of providing the Ledger with a title, *Untitled 1976*

relies on the self-inscribed date on the cover of the Ledger as its semiotic indicator. At the same time, the date that follows, 1993 denotes the point in the Ledger's life where it was 'created' as an art work. In terms of the Ledger's biography this can be seen as an active intervention by Geers that incorporates the Ledger and its narrative of violence into his artistic oeuvre. What this intervention also insures, due to the physical process of the authorial nomination, is that the Ledger from this point onwards will always be read alongside Geers' artistic narrative.

The following section shall examine the construction of Geers' practice beginning by discussing one of his major influences. Instead of tracing the trajectory of the Ledger as a readymade from Duchamp to Geers, the next section will provide a context that is specific to South Africa in order to the development of Geers conceptual strategies that saw the Ledger becoming an artwork. As in the previous chapter here we see other smaller biographical caveats as forming a necessary part of the Ledger's third life.

7. The Stamp of Influence

Rules and conventions do exist to be broken, stripped down and reinterpreted through reappropriation. Whilst the artistic precedent of the readymade discussed above has given some kind of historical context to reading the Ledger as an artwork titled *Untitled 1976* (1993), what promises to shed a different light on this examination is a more localized precedent deployed by a contemporary of Geers', Neil Goedhals (1957 - 1990).

Whilst he was alive Goedhals was a prolific artist who showed at a number of galleries in Johannesburg, although his only solo show was a retrospective, almost two years after his death at the age of 33. As the curators of his retrospective held at the Gertrude Posal Gallery in 1993 state in the accompanying exhibition catalogue "for Goedhals, the distinction between so-called High Art and popular culture was an artificial one. He used these sources in a quiet, but relentless assault on artistic, social and personal conventions" (Jersky & Rosen, 1993: 4). In an "attempt to taunt the

custodians of High Art" Goedhals aimed to achieve what he described as a "styleless style" that expressed his desire to make "art that refuses to settle down into traditional categories of art production". Recalling Goedhals' fascination with Duchamp, Geers himself writes in an obituary for Goedhals published in *Die Vrye Weekblad* that:

> No single visual artist held Neil's attention for as long as did Marcel Duchamp. Only recently did he feel that he was coming to terms with Duchamp's conception of the readymade. He spent six months going to pawn and antique shops with Braam Kruger, searching for the perfect readymade. The search proved fruitless beyond redecorating Braam's Kitchen. (Geers, 1990: 5).

Flitting between multiple styles Goedhals' work was often difficult for local audiences to penetrate as the apparent "artistic meaning" often eluded the viewer. Having a distinct "distaste for the codes of authority" vested in the production of artwork, Jersky and Rosen note that:

> The frequent and inexhaustible way in which Goedhals explored the potential of the readymade is a remarkable feature of his oeuvre. Goedhals often used the found object to question and subvert different codes of authority. As Goedhals disclosed and, thereby 'betrayed' these powerful codes all around him, he muted the effects of their power. As he did this, so he unravelled for himself the legitimacy of many of his own values. This process of deconstruction accounts for his constant reworking of familiar ideas throughout his oeuvre, albeit explored in a diversity of styles (Jersky & Rosen, 1993: 6).

Goedhals, characteristic of his distaste for the authority upheld by convention, saw his artistic production as not being separate from his perception and interaction with the world. Using the found object as a way to question and challenge his own artistic authority, Goedhals often refused "to work with his own hand or to assert any unique gesture of the artist". Again, with a tone of distinct admiration, Geers suggests:

> The brilliance of Neil's analytical mind manifested itself in the form of visual puns and word games. His art engages the viewer emotionally and intellectually, leaving one with no escape route. Where works are aesthetic, it is only as a means to an end. Taking the hidden and the obscure as his subjects, his form is appropriately hidden and obscure (Geers, 1990: 5).

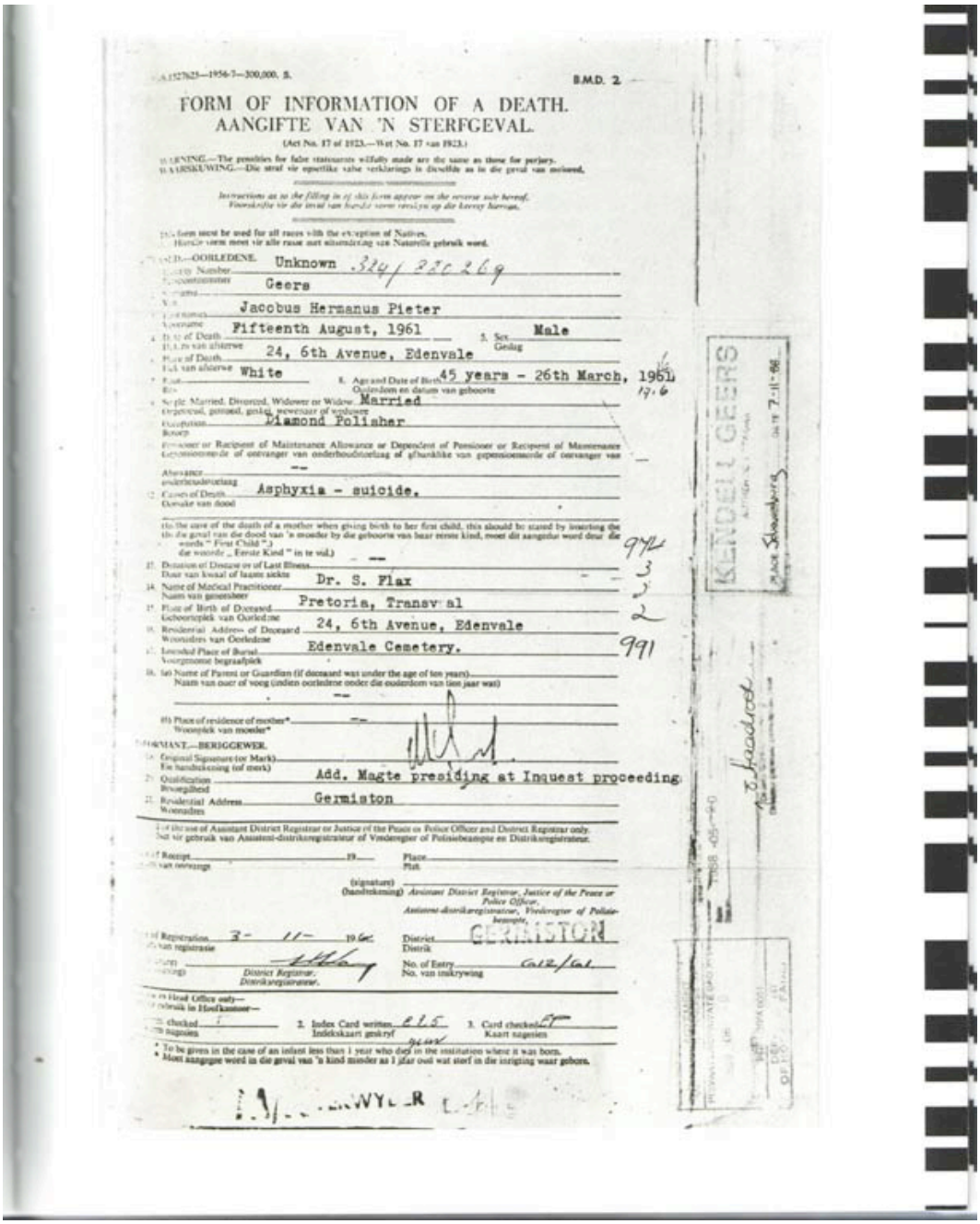
Using the notion of the encounter with the found object Goedhals, in the tradition of the Duchampian readymade would purchase popular artworks from second hand shops, (described as "accessible, realistic landscapes) and presented them as his own work. As Jersky and Rosen note:

> Goedhals' only contribution to these works other than in the choice of the object, has been the 'tailor-made' rubber stamp of his name which, in itself, contests the notion of artistic authenticity. The rubber stamp which he had made with the word GOEDHALS on it, as Marcel van Heerden has commented, recalls the bureaucratic stamps that are used in the South African Defence Force. In this way, Goedhals challenges the authority of the individual artist as well as subversively appropriating the stamp of state power. By using a rubber stamp rather than his own hand, he denied himself the authority of the artist genius while, ironically, reasserting its authority by punning on the idea of the rubber stamp of authority (Jersky and Rosen, 1993: 7).

The use of the stamp here is familiar to Geers' own deployment of the form of interrogating the construction of the readymade. Geers worked closely with Goedhals having both been members of the band *Koos*. Yet the use of the stamps in the Ledger, which nominates and certifies it as *Untitled 1976* (1993), was not the first time Geers had deployed this system described here as Goedhals' technique for questioning and destabilizing artistic authorship. Geers reflects:

> His (Goedhals) interest in chance, death and the readymade became ominous in an early work of mine, titled "Portrait of JHP". The work forms part of Neil's very small collection. He cherished the piece, regrading it as one of the most powerful works of art he had encountered. It consists of my grandfather's death certificate authenticated as art by a rubber stamp (Geers, 1990: 5).

In 1988, the year he graduated from Wits, Geers produced a work titled *Death Certificate* (1988) (here described by Geers as *Portrait of JHP)* which features a slightly different version of the stamp used in *Untitled 1976* (1993). In this version his name is followed in smaller text by the word 'Authentication' with two additional spaces left for 'place' and 'date' (see fig. 10 overleaf).



B.M.D. 2

FORM OF INFORMATION OF A DEATH.
AANGIFTE VAN 'N STERFGEVAL.

(Act No. 17 of 1923.—Wet No. 17 van 1923.)

WARNING.—The penalties for false statements wilfully made are the same as those for perjury.
WAARSKUWING.—Die straf vir opsetlike valse verklarings is dieselfde as in die geval van meineed.

Instructions as to the filling in of this form appear on the reverse side hereof.
Voorskrifte vir die invul van hierdie vorm verskyn op die keersy hiervan.

This form must be used for all races with the exception of Natives.
Hierdie vorm moet vir alle rasse met uitsondering van Naturelle gebruik word.

1. (a) OORLEDENE. Unknown 324/220269
(b) Identity Number
(c) Surname Geers
(d) Names Jacobus Hermanus Pieter
(e) Christian Names
(f) Surname
2. Date of Death Fifteenth August, 1961
Datum van afsterwe
3. Sex Geslag Male
4. Place of Death 24, 6th Avenue, Edenvale
Plek van afsterwe
5. Race White
Ras
6. Age and Date of Birth 45 years - 26th March, 1961
Ouderdom en datum van geboorte 17.6
7. Single, Married, Divorced, Widower or Widow Married
Ongetroud, getroud, geskeie, wewenaar of weduwee
8. Occupation Diamond Polisher
Beroep
9. Pensioner or Recipient of Maintenance Allowance or Dependent of Pensioner or Recipient of Maintenance
Pensioenontvanger of ontvanger van onderhoudstoelaag of afhanklike van gepensioeneerde of ontvanger van
Allowance
onderhoudstoelaag
10. Cause of Death Asphyxia - suicide.
Oorsaak van dood
(In the case of the death of a mother when giving birth to her first child, this should be stated by inserting the
In die geval van die dood van 'n moeder by die geboorte van haar eerste kind, moet dit aangetoon word deur die
words "First Child ")
die woorde „Eerste Kind " in te vul.)
11. Duration of Disease or of Last Illness
Duur van kwaal of laatste siekte
12. Name of Medical Practitioner Dr. S. Flax
Naam van geneesheer
13. Place of Birth of Deceased Pretoria, Transvaal
Geboorteplek van Oorledene
14. Residential Address of Deceased 24, 6th Avenue, Edenvale
Woonadres van Oorledene
15. Intended Place of Burial Edenvale Cemetery.
Voorgenome begraafplek
16. (a) Name of Parent or Guardian (if deceased was under the age of ten years)
Naam van ouer of voog (indien oorledene onder die ouderdom van tien jaar was)
(b) Place of residence of mother*
Woonplek van moeder*

DECLARANT.—BERIGGEWER.

17. Original Signature (or Mark)
Eie handtekening (of merk)
18. Qualification Add. Magte presiding at Inquest proceeding.
Bevoegdheid
19. Residential Address Germiston
Woonadres

For the use of Assistant District Registrar or Justice of the Peace or Police Officer and District Registrar only.
Slegs vir gebruik van Assistent-distriksregistrateur of Vredesregter of Polisiebeampte en Distriksregistrateur.

Receipt ..... 19.... Place .....
van ontvangs Plek

(signature)
(Ondertekening) *Assistant District Registrar, Justice of the Peace or Police Officer,*
Assistent-distriksregistrateur, Vredesregter of Polisiebeampte,

Registration 3- 11- 1961 District GERMISTON
van registrasie Distrik

District Registrar,
Distriksregistrateur.

No. of Entry 6412/61
No. van inskrywing

For Head Office only—
Gebruik in Hoofkantoor—

1. Checked
Nagesien
2. Index Card written 21.5
Indekskaart geskryf
3. Card checked
Kaart nagesien

* To be given in the case of an infant less than 1 year who dies in the institution where it was born.
* Moet aangegee word in die geval van 'n kind minder as 1 jaar oud wat sterf in die inrigting waar gebore.

KENDELL GEERS

Figure 10. Kendell Geers. *Death Certificate*, (1988).

This stamp sits innocuously in the margin of the document and are barely noticeable unless the information on the document is being closely scrutinized. The information contained on this death certificate is important to understanding the Ledger because it establishes a chronology of the way in which Geers was working with these kind of found objects in order to appropriate them into his artistic oeuvre. The certificate, titled 'Form of Information of a Death' belongs to Jacobus Hermanus Pieter Geers - Kendell Geers' grandfather. His death is registered as 'Asphyxia - Suicide'. He died in fifteenth of August 1961 at the age of 45. Geers never knew his grandfather as he died before he was born. However this appropriation of the official document recording such a death plays a role in understanding how Geers sought to incorporate material traces of these events in order to address and destabilize their political content. This has a similar precedent in the work of Goedhals where, as Jersky and Rosen write:

> Certainly, one of Goedhals' major themes was to nullify the credibility of those legal documents that identify us to anonymity or which impose a fictional uniformity on us. So, for example he often manipulated the actual documents themselves in order to demonstrate both his defiance of legal and bureaucratic identity, but also to illustrate his position in relation to them (Jersky and Rosen, 1993: 7).

Likewise, Geers' use of the stamp in both the death certificate of his grandfather and the Ledger can be said to represent a personal imposition onto the political dimension that the documents represent in their various forms. This action thus includes the narratives of the documents into his own artistic biography thereby enabling Geers' to establish his own position in relation to them. Seen in the context of his broader oeuvre this type of self-portrait enables an interrogation into his identity as an artist that is determined by the specific social and political conditions of the time in which the work was produced.

The following section will discuss the circumstances of the Ledger's exhibition in the form of *Untitled 1976 (1993)*. Here it should be noted that because there is no illustrations or written evidence of this exhibition the following section is based on the most likely timeline when the Ledger could have possibly been displayed.

8. Exhibition - State of the Art

The first illustrated picture of the Ledger occurs in the catalogue "Argot" published in 1995. The page is split diagonally with the Ledger shown on the top of the page closed on a desk. The bottom half of the page shows a detail of the page where Pieterson's name is recorded. As is suggested by the date Aug 25 1993 which is inscribed on the inside cover, the Ledger became an artwork on that date. However there is no indication of when precisely it was first exhibited. At the time Geers was represented by the Everard Read Contemporary in Johannesburg and had two solo exhibitions, *Threshold* and *The New Patron* in 1993 when the Ledger was stamped. However, given the sparse literature of this period and the absence of catalogues the Ledger is not mentioned or recorded at all during 1993.

According to Warren Siebrits, who later facilitated its sale, the Ledger in its form as *Untitled 1976* (1993) was exhibited at the Everard Read Contemporary in 1994 on a group show titled 'State of the Art' from 26 February until March 26 curated by Trent Read. The show featured work by 16 artists that included Allan Alborough, Jane Alexander, Belinda Blignaut, Willem Boshoff, Settlers Chabalala, Steven Cohen, Guy du Toit, Kendell Geers, Jahnnes Maswanganyi, C.J. Morkel, Goldwin Ndou, Owen Ndou, Freddy Ramabulana, Joachim Schöenfeldt, Simon Stone and Konrad Welz.

Trent Read described the show by saying that its intention was not to present an overview of contemporary South African art but rather to show the work of artists who "we believe are making some of the finest and most profoundly thoughtful work at a period of our history when the very bedrock of the old society is being shaken apart and the new order has yet to come". He continues;

> This is not an exhibition of 'protest' art nor are the works with a single exception overtly 'political' although obviously all contemporary work of any significance will mirror, in however distorted a fashion, the society from whence it comes. By contrast it is an exhibition where artists have responded to a challenge. The brief was deliberately broad - to create work/s that is (to use an almost indefinable term "important". Important not in the sense of monumental size but important within the context of their own development

> within the broader set of art in tis country now - hence the paradigmatic "State of the Art" (Read, 1994: 3).

Writing for *The Star Tonight* Hazel Friedman notes that "the show was aimed at exhibiting 'important' works by Read's brightest and most boisterous artists" (Read, 1994: 3). Yet Friedman was largely unimpressed by what she regarded as art "at its derivative worst, it emerges as little more than an aesthetic retread. And, at its lowest ethical ebb, it stretches even the gullibility of die hard groupies". Giving a fuller summation she further states that:

> ...somewhere between the Important Idea and its Actuality, something has gone wrong here resulting in works that make rice-paper seem heavy-weight by comparison. The point is that cleverer concepts don't necessarily make for good art. Unless the tenuous line between intention and conception is successfully crossed, art lands up looking as formulaic and trite as most formula ridden still-life (Friedman, 1994: 3).

In this arrangement of seemingly disparate works the Ledger, like it did during the *Limits of Liberty* exhibition held a year earlier, went largely unnoticed. Seeing 'flickers of hope' Friedman does however single out Geers' contribution to the show, not *Untitled 1976* (1993) but instead another, more performative work where Geers joined all nine of the country's political parties as they prepared to take place in South Africa's first democratic elections. Titled *Untitled (ANC, AVF, AWB, CR, DR, IFP, NP, PAC, SACP)* (1993- 1994), the exhibited result was his membership cards all collected in a single vitrine.

Here the Ledger continued to go unnoticed where it was presumably on view to the public. This can be attributed to the fact that as an object it was seemingly innocuous, being exhibited closed, with the stamps that represent Geers' presence in the object being invisible to the world. As will be discussed later the Ledger would be exhibited again as an artwork by Geers; as a facsimile of the page that records the entry of Hector Pieterson's name.

Conclusion

It is not until the appearance of two documents which are both dated on the 3rd of February 1994 that the material trace of the Ledger becomes visible. Coming from different sources these two documents, which form the basis of the next chapter, provide a clear indication the the Ledger was in fact exhibited at the Everard Read Contemporary, but provide no conclusive evidence when. Yet what they do indicate is how the Ledger would once again shift in its character as an object revealing the tension that occurs in reading it as an artwork versus a historical record. Again, these two documents summon alternate biographies that impact on understanding the life of the Ledger.

The material trace of the Ledger can be found in its status as a commodity. When its historical significance was identified and it was sold to a museum there comes conflicting readings that complicate understanding the Ledger as an artwork and Geers' presence within its narrative becomes overshadowed by the significance given to the record of Hector Pieterson. As discussed in the previous chapter where the mythological status of Pieterson was seen to be adopted and reconstructed in different ways to suit the changing political and social landscape as South Africa moved into democracy, so the next chapter will pick up that argument to illustrate how the Ledger is used as a prop in that process.

Chapter 4 - Fourth Life

Introduction

This chapter will examine the shift that takes place in a reading of the Ledger as it moves from its third life as a found object turned readymade artwork into its fourth life - as an historical object invested with archival value. This occurred when the Ledger was bought from the Everard Read Contemporary by the Museum Africa in Newtown Johannesburg. Addressing the central issue at the heart of this study the conflict emerges between reading historical objects as archival documents or artworks invested with value due to some kind of aesthetic intervention. This has implications for the Ledger's biography because it raises the fundamental question of how it is seen in its current incarnation. The shift from its third life to its forth is therefore the most crucial because it brings us to the present day of the Ledger's life.

This chapter picks up from that point when the Ledger was sold as a commodity to a museum, again changing the character of it as an object. Yet again this conjures another biography; that of the museum that bought the object. The material trace of the Ledger can be found when it was first recorded in the minutes of the Curators Report to the Advisory Committee of the Africana Museum which suggested that the object be purchased in order to furnish its exhibition program. Here, to discuss the shift of the Ledger from an artwork to a historical document I begin with the biography of the museum which, when the Ledger was purchased, was going through its own transition that reflected the broader shifts in South Africa as it began to be reconstructed

This chapter picks up from that point when the Ledger was sold as a commodity to a museum, again changing the character of it as an object. Yet again this conjures another biography; that of the institution that bought the object, the African Museum. The material trace of the Ledger can be found when it was first recorded in the minutes of the Curators Report to the Advisory Committee of the Africana Museum

which suggested that the object be purchased in order to furnish its exhibition program. Here, to discuss the shift of the Ledger from an artwork to a historical document given the title MA-1994-211, I begin with the biography of the museum which, when the Ledger was purchased, was going through its own transition that reflected the broader shifts in South Africa as it began to be reconstructed.

Located in the complexities of the ideological shift facing the Africana Museum is the question of the Ledger's value; as an aesthetic readymade artwork versus one of seemingly archival value. Yet as the next two sections, 'Back to the Future: Purchase' and 'The Value of a Name' will illustrate, these two types of readings are not mutually exclusive because they are centered around the same currency invested in Hector Pieterson. 'The Archive as Object' then shall extend this reading by examining the use of the Ledger, referred to by its acquisition number MA-1994-211, on display in the new museum.

The next section 'Provencae: *Untitled (1976)* vs *MA-1994-211*' will bring the discussion back to Geers' relationship with the Ledger, looking at how his authorship nomination of the Ledger continues to complicate the contextual position it occupies in the collection of the Museum as MA-1994-211. This will examine how the construction of Geers' artistic myth has impacted on reading the Ledger and what it says about how Pieterson's presence has determined the way it is read as an object imbued with historical significance and artistic significance.

1. From Africana to Africa: The Museum

According to Warren Siebrits who writes in his essay 'States of Emergence: Growing Up in Apartheid South Africa' the Ledger was purchased by the Africana Museum in May 1994 (Siebrits, 2009: 55). Officially to be reopened to the public in August of that year as Museum Africa, the shift of the Africana Museum to its present day incarnation can be suggested to mirror some of the complexities involved in the broader process of grand ideological change (from apartheid to democracy) being negotiated at the time in South Africa. Thus, to give a context to how the archival

imperative placed on the Ledger and its purchase by the museum mirrored these broader changes, it is necessary to begin by interrogating the history of the museum's shift.

In keeping with a biographical methodology, this examines the ideological motivations of why the Ledger was purchased by the Africana Museum in its own attempt to begin to refashion its approach to a new and emergent constituency. Here the biography of museum is inextricably tied to that of the Ledger because its purchase represents an appeal to the different ways in which objects can be used to address and thereby shift alternate narratives.

Started by John Gaspard Gubbins in 1935, the Africana Museum was housed at the Johannesburg Public Library until 1976.[30] As a project, the impetus of the Africana Museum was aimed to augment Gubbins' library, which was open to visitors from all races, with "things and pictures". As Sara G. Byala notes in 'The Museum becomes Archive: Reassessing Johannesburg's MuseumAfrica' (2010), the physical manifestations of Gubbins' projects (first his library and then a museum) mirrored his "philosophical sense of place in the world" that aimed to move beyond "what he saw as a stifling preoccupation with binaries (like 'us' versus 'them' and 'black' vs 'white')" (Byala, 2010: 13). As Byala notes Gubbins worldview was that;

> All who inhabit the land of African and all cultural products have an intrinsic worth as Africana. By collecting, studying and celebrating the many relics that tell history's multifaceted tale, South Africans could learn to see themselves simply as South Africans (Byala, 2010: 13).

However, this was not to be the case. After Gubbins premature death shortly after the museum was opened, the ideological position at the heart of the Africana Museum

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30 S.G. Byala describes Gubbins as: "An expatriate Briton who journeyed to South Africa in 1902 for an adventure and never left, Gubbins was alternately a farmer, a writer, a miner and a solicitor. After discovering the tombstone of the first white woman to die north of the Vaal River, Gubbins became enamoured with the history of his adopted home, eventually becoming a passionate collector of Africana – as he understood it, any books or objects relating to any inhabitant of the region" .

was lost. In 1976 the Museum was split with part of its collection being housed at the premises of the old produce market in Newtown. Byala suggests that this split occurred along ideological lines saying that:

> Placing all of its enthnographic - or black - objects inside the new space and calling itself the Africana Museum in Progress (AMIP) while maintaining the museum on the top floor of the public library, the Africana Museum split itself physically and ideologically (Byala, 2010: 16).

As she writes, prior to the attainment of this new space in Newtown, the Africana Museum, certainly until 1976, was "distinguished by the influences of the Johannesburg Public Library (JPL)". Under the jurisdiction of the state, the "JPL practised an ineffectual liberalism that professed equality without practising it" (Byala, 2010: 13). During this period it is further suggested that the museum largely echoed the segregationist policies of apartheid. Byala notes that "in the Africana Museum, apartheid - or the logical and necessary separation of races and ethnicities - was both ordained and explained" (Byala, 2010: 14).

However, when the split occurred that saw the AMIP come into being, the shift between a museum that formed part of the ideological state apparatus and one that reflected the lives of ordinary citizens began to occur. Before their reunification into a single entity of Museum Africa in 1994, Byala notes that the "AMIP eclipsed the Africana Museum, interfacing with South African society in an attempt to render itself useful to the transitioning country" (Byala, 2010: 17).

Closed between 1988 and 1993 to be relaunched as a single entity in 1994, she further observes that the new curators "insisted that [the new museums] new understanding of the past resonate with the majority of South Africans" adding that "no longer would it serve as a mouthpiece - wittingly or not - for the near defunct racist state" (2010: 16). However this impetus was hampered by a familiar problem that confronted cultural institutions trying to redress the way the rift between of South African history (which told the official state sanctioned white story) and culture (which made up a narrative of black primitivism) was portrayed. She writes:

> While it was noted in 1993 that '[t]he general aims of the founders of the Africana Museum are still valid today, logistical and intellectual conundrums meant that reinvention immediately proved challenging. Above all the separation between black and white objects placed the museum outside the currents of change permeating the country. Yet, rectifying this problem was far from straightforward. That white cultural objects had been acquired based on their uncommonness whereas black objects were chosen to illustrate the everyday meant that merging the two defied a simple plan (Byala, 2010: 16).

Wanting to cleave the new museum into chronological and cultural halves which would, on the one hand, depict major historical events and on the other, portray tradition (associated with 'black' cultural experience), meant that the museum's proposed division between culture and chronology would merely replicate the divisions between the binaries of black and white experiences promulgated by apartheid's grand narrative.[31]

Instead, aware of the pitfalls inherent in this potentially divisive approach, Deon van Tonder (1994) highlights that the mission statement drafted in 1991 which defined its role "to serve the community by using the Africana Museum's resources to communicate an understanding of the history of southern Africa" (van Tonder, 1994: 173) was reworked as the complexities of transformation became clearer. Instead the new Museum Africa was now to "become 'a dynamic museum of the community, where the diverse history and heritage of Southern Africa is explored and presented' and to be 'an educational force for unity and transformation'" (1994: 174).

During consultations with the Wits History Workshop between 1990 and 1992, van Tonder notes that the need for the museum to express the and highlight the

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[31] As van Tonder reflects "From 1990, Museum staff become involved in protracted debates about the design of the new Museum and the nature of its displays. An important question was whether or not there should be two sections, a chronological history hall and a cultural history section. Although such a division was artificial, and would have perpetuated the racial and cultural differentiation so characteristic of the apartheid era, and in particular of previous Africana Museum exhibitions (for 'history' read whites and for 'culture' read blacks) (van Tonder, 1994: 174).

"heterogeneity of South African society" was identified.[32] After almost three years of debate amongst museum staff, the premise of the new Museum Africa's opening exhibition was settled on. Titled 'Johannesburg Transformations' the exhibition consisted of four individual sections each with their own curatorial premise that addressed a specific issue around the transformation of Johannesburg. As van Tonder explains:

> The choice of each theme was based on various criteria: would it appeal to the immediate community; and could Johannesburg be used as a microcosm for the history and heritage of South Africa as a whole? Moreover, in the period of change, both in the country and in the Museum, the theme of 'transformations' seemed appropriate (van Tonder, 1994: 177).

It was for this exhibition that the Ledger was purchased by the museum. van Tonder notes that in planning the exhibition, Sandra de Wet recalls that "it seemed obvious to us at that stage that we had to do something on political life in Johannesburg" adding that "we were trying to find elements of peoples lives that were vital" (de Wet in van Tonder, 1994: 176). Once the Museum's opening exhibition had been decided on all the curators where given a theme and the freedom to examine any aspect of it with the only brief provided that it investigate Johannesburg and the transformations within the parameters of the respective themes. van Tonder notes that since the museum was hoping to be "accountable to the larger community and wanted to show that an 'objective' history was not possible" it was decided that each curator would take authorship of their specific exhibits. With the desired mandate to "redress the imbalances of previous displays and to move in the direction of social history" Sandra de Wet explains that:

> we did not want to exclude anybody and we were wanting to redress imbalances...before, when you explored the history of gold you automatically homed in on the Randlords, so now you deliberately examined the other side of the coin. When you investigated homes before, Parktown sprang to mind...that is what has been preserved in Johannesburg or deemed worthy of preservation...now we examine the history of squatters and informal housing,

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[32] For a fuller account of this process see Carolyn Hamilton, 1994. "Against the Museum as Chameleon". *South African Historical Journal*. 31 (1) pp. 184 - 190.

> What has been excluded from museums was always black history...what you always found was the Boer war, stuff that was important to whites...but you never actually found the struggle in a South African Museum. Once again, this needed to be addressed (de Wet in van Tonder, 1994: 177).

It was in this climate that the Ledger was bought by the Museum. In an attempt to augment a previously excluded narrative of 'the struggle' and 'black history' it was purchased as a piece of paraphernalia that could be contextually leveraged against other objects to address the absence of representation within the Museum space. The next section will examine how the Ledger came to be purchased by the Museum beginning with the record of its material trace that is evidenced in two documents from this period. Again the transmutation of the Ledger can be traced in its biographical account located in other objects and records connected to it.

2. Back to the Future: Purchase

In February 1994, on the cusp of South Africa's democratic transition, the Ledger once again shifted, this time into its fourth life, from an artistic object to once again an archival record reflecting the bureaucratic record of apartheid violence. As already mentioned this shift in the life of the Ledger is marked by its material trace in the form of two documents that are both dated on the 3rd of February, 1994. The first is a letter from Marie Olivier that is addressed to Trent Read, the director of the Everard Read Contemporary Gallery (see fig. 11, overleaf). In her capacity as Acting Director of the State Archives Service Olivier writes that: "It has come to my attention that an official inquest register has been obtained by Everard Read Contemporary and that the register is being offered for sale" (Olivier, 1994).

Not being aware of the "exact details" but "according to (her) information", Olivier states that the "register was picked up at a dump site at the Johannesburg magistrate's offices". She continues; "I wish to point out that in the case of such a register actually having been obtained, it would remain an official record and state property which may not be alienated and should not have been allowed to be alienated" (Olivier, 1994).



DEPARTEMENT VAN NASIONALE OPVOEDING
DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

STAATSARGIEFDIENS
STATE ARCHIVES SERVICE

Navrae Enquiries: Miss M.E. Olivier

Verw. Ref. M 10/5/3/2

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Privaatsak Private Bag } x 236
Pretoria 0001

1994 -02- -3

The Director
Everard Read Contemporary (Pty) Ltd
Private Bag 5
PARKLANDS
2121

Dear Mr Read

It has come to my attention that an official inquest register has been obtained by Everard Read Contemporary and that the register is being offered for sale.

The exact details are not known to me, but according to my information the register was picked up at a dump site at the Johannesburg magistrate's offices.

I wish to point out that in the case of such a register actually having been obtained, it would remain an official record and state property which may not be alienated and should not have been allowed to be alienated.

I would appreciate your kind assistance to clarify this matter.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Marie Olivier

DIRECTOR : STATE ARCHIVES SERVICE (ACTING)

(10340203)

Meld asseblief bostaande verwysingsnommer in u antwoord Please quote above-mentioned reference number in your reply

DNO-6

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Figure 11. Letter from Marie Olivier to Trent Read.

This suggests a sensitivity on the behalf of the state to the possession and control of such an official inquest register. What this also seems to suggest is that the State Archives Services also saw the value of the Ledger as an archival document upon which it was their mandate to do with it as they deemed fit. Here the use of the word 'alienation' suggests that the Everard Read Contemporary's possession of the Ledger was in fact illicit.

In terms of archival discourse the term 'alienation' suggests: "The possession of records by an individual or organization not legally entitled to their custody" (SAA, 2005: http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/alienation). During this period in South Africa, with the mass destruction of records this kind of illicit trafficking in apartheid era documents and records was not uncommon. However the relationship of this letter to the next document which was dated on the same day suggests that the State Archives Service was in the habit of attempting to stop or at least intervene in such trade.

The second document in which the Ledger's material trace can be found is the minutes of the Curators Report to the Africana Museum Advisory Committee (see appendix 2). In that document under section 3 titled 'New Material' the report lists "Inquest Register, Johannesburg, 1976" to be purchased from the Everard Read Contemporary. The Ledger is then further described with the title *Untitled 1976* by Kendell Geers. Here the price of the purchase is noted as R10 000 with a museum discount of 20% being giving bringing the total to R8000. The report states:

> The artist Kendell Geers found the register lying on a rubbish dump on the comer of Pim and Wolhuter Streets, Newtown. He is a contemporary artist who uses found objects to make ethno-socio political statements. In this case he has not altered the register in any way except to sign the inside cover twice, stamp it with his signature and stamp it "Copyright reserved, beware of imitations"and an inscribe the date 25/8/1993. The register containing 257 pages lists the names of the dead, the date of death, date of police docket received, date the record was sent to the Attorney-General and details of criminal cases deriving from them (see appendix 2).

It should be noted here that the report states that Kendell Geers found the Ledger of a rubbish dump which conflicts with the account that he obtained it from Rob Weinek who had originally obtained it from the dump in Newtown. Again this summons one of the foundational myths of the Ledger with the notion that Geers was the one to first find the Ledger. This enables him to imprint his own narrative on the Ledger as an art object without the chronological clutter of other competing and disparate voices who may or may not have had contact with the Ledger before him. In more specific terms the myths re-asserts the status-quo of the Ledger as his artistic production without the intervention of other peoples hands in its history.

Interestingly the same report lists the entire expenditure for exhibits of the Museum Africana exhibits over the period of 1993/1994 as being R35 000 which would mean that this single purchase account for 22% of their overall expenditure. What this would seem to indicate is the importance placed by the museum on the Ledger. Giving a historical context to motivate for the purchase the report further states that:

> The year 1976 was a memorable one in Johannesburg's history because it was the year of the Soweto uprising. Many of the dead in this register appear with the letter "R" possibly indicating riot victims. Among them is the name of Hector Pieterson, the first victim of the Soweto riots on 16 June 1976. Most of the entries in the register are of black people. The register is certified for disposal by the Justice Department on 31 December 1986 (see appendix 2).

The report then further goes on to outline how the purchase of the Ledger would be used in the context of the museum, stating:

> The Africana Museum is planning a display on “Political Transformations” for the opening exhibition and the Soweto uprising is integral to it. We have little material apart from photographs but this register would be a focal point. 1976 was a turning point in our history and this document should not be lost to the Johannesburg public at large. The Africana Museum is the right home for it (see appendix 2).

What this reveals is the limited amount of information in the form of actual records available to museums at the time that reflected a particular side of the mechanisms of

apartheid bureaucracy. In a way the Ledger would thus be used to fill the absence of 'black history' and 'the struggle' in the Museum. As the next section will discuss, the Ledger was not purchased for its comprehensive archival content, but rather for the fact that it contained the name of Hector Pieterson and what it represented in terms of the collective experience of the struggle. Given the acquisition reference MA-1994-211, what this illustrates is how the Ledger shifts from its third life to its fourth and the conflict that emerges over its interpretation as an historical object versus one of aesthetic value.

3. The Value of a Name

Approximately half way through the Ledger, recorded under the letter P, third from the bottom of the page is the record of the inquest into the unnatural death of Hector Pieterson. Like the two other names beneath, his has higher-case 'R' in red ink preceding it in the left hand side margin of the page, indicating that his death was as a result of rioting. From just looking at this information in the Ledger it is not possible to tell much about Pieterson; we cannot determine where he died, or exactly how he died (although the red 'R' would suggest that his death was a result of violent force). We cannot even tell his age. Like the other unnatural deaths recorded beneath his name, he had no record of criminal history. His name is simply an entry amongst many others.

On other pages of the Ledger the left hand side margin is full of the capital letter 'R' bringing into context how ordinary Hector Pieterson's name is within this case of the record of exceptional violence. Indicating an awareness of this fact, as well as raising other particular archival concerns around the display of the Ledger, the minutes of the meeting of the Curators Report to the Advisory Committee (appendix 2.1) notes that:

> Mrs Woodward suggested that the register should be copied and a copy should be given to the State Archives. Mrs Woodward also suggested that if the register is to: be displayed, the pages should be turned regularly to prevent fading. Mr Bloom suggested that the register should be closed when on

> display but with a photograph of a relevant page. The Committee suggested that the copyright should be bought along with the register (see appendix 2.1).

In this excerpt several things can be noted. The first is the two pieces of advice given by Mrs Woodward. Aware of the archival value of its contents, Mrs Woodward's suggestion that Ledger be copied and given to the State Archives can possibly suggest that the letter addressed to Trent Read the same day from the Director of the State Archives Services was a result of dialogue between someone on the Africana Museum staff and Ms Marie Olivier.[33] Secondly, Mrs Woodward's suggestion that the pages be turned whilst on the Ledger was display, thus ensuring that they would not fade were seemingly ignored. The record of Pieterson's name is now only barely legible and appears to have been retraced in a light graphite pencil. The other names on the lower third of this page are similarly faded suggesting that they were subjected to exhibition lights for a lengthy period of time.

Evidently they were; as the Africana Museum became Museum Africa and the staff responsible for the opening exhibitions of the new institution left, such mandates were ignored. As the present curator Diana Wall recalls, the exhibition referred to as "Political Transformations" in the curators report to the advisory committee, was only removed in 1997, suggesting that the Ledger was displayed open for a period of three years. Mr Bloom's suggestion that the Ledger be exhibited closed with a photograph of a relevant page would also seem not to have been taken up given the current condition of the page.

According to Trent Read, the Director of the Everard Read Contemporary at the time, Geers was somewhat reluctant for the sale to take place because of the fact that the Ledger would be displayed open. Geers contended that the Ledger was now an artwork and not an archival object to be used for the didactic methods of museological display. Nevertheless the sale went through for a significant amount given the

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33 The fax signature on the letter from Marie Olivier to Trent Read records Feb 03 '94 11:34 whereas the minutes of the Advisory Board of the Africana Museum read 'Minutes of the Meeting of the Africana Museum Advisory Committee held in the new Africana Museum on 3 February 1994 at 15:30'.

acquisitions budget for the Museum. Whilst this will be discussed later in the conclusion, it must be noted that this is an important conflict around the way the Ledger can be interpreted because it raises one of the fundamental aspects of its value as an archival document versus those of an art object whose aesthetic merits position Geers' presence within the narrative of the document.

The next section will examine how the Ledger was used after its purchase by the Museum, discussing the shift from a readymade art object to an historical document. Significantly enough, its positioning as an archival document was still centered predominantly around the single name of Hector Pieterson, thus reducing its archival value by investing in the aesthetic mediation of Pieterson's death. By coupling a record of his name to the photograph that depicts his death, the Museum finds itself complicit in perpetuating the myth making process that singled out Pieterson as an exceptional victim of apartheid. Mr Bloom's observation that the Ledger should be exhibited closed "with a photograph of the relevant page". It is no secret what 'the relevant page' was in this instance.[34]

4. The Archive as Object

Contrary to the curators report to the advisory committee, the exhibition on which the Ledger was displayed was not called "Political Transformations". Instead it was displayed as part of the "Road to Democracy" which was the second of the four exhibitions that altogether comprised the opening show titled "Johannesburg Transformations" of the new Museum Africa when opened in August 1994. Describing the "Road to Democracy", van Tonder explains:

> This exhibit celebrates South Africa's first democratic elections and Johannesburg's role in them. The exhibit, curated by David Saks, makes use of a multi-media approach to Johannesburg's political history by including posters, photographs of famous political struggles waged in Johannesburg's

[34] It must be noted that as a limitation of this study the other names in the Ledger have not been investigated which is perhaps a part of the hypocrisy that I draw attention to. Give the rest of the names in the Ledger, at least those with a capital R in the left hand side margin would do some justice to further study of the records contained in the Ledger.

> streets, the death register which contains Hector Pieterson's name - the first student to die in police gunfire in 1976 - objects termed 'cultural weapons' in the early 1990's and used in township battles, as well as other objects relating to the struggle for political freedom. It also contains a voting booth acquired from the Independent Electoral Commission and used in the 1994 election (van Tonder, 1994: 178).

Yet, what this represents in its own peculiar way, is a desire for the previously excluded black subject to now be given a face, an image. At the same time as the everyday is be given a representative object, Hector Pieterson provides the context. This could be regarded as a semiotic trap faced by the museum; Nzima's photograph of Pieterson already had a history in the struggle and along with the posters and other photographs of political struggles, the Ledger was merely another kind of object to bolster the content. In any event, there it lay open on the entry of Pieterson, like a shrine to his memory that carried with it the other names in its pages.

Because of the metonymical action provided by Sam Nzima's image of Hector Pieterson, the unnamed victim of the struggle an identity in both the visual sign of the photograph and in the textual trace recorded in the Ledger. A question that then emerges is on whose behalf is this previously marginalized voice now being articulated? As the new Museum Africa strove for an "inclusive history" of the previously marginalized apartheid subject to be incorporated into the renewed construction of the cultural imagination, what happened to the other voices and narratives contained in the Ledger? In a sense they become forgotten due to the weight granted to the grand narrative contained in the image and myth of Pieterson as "the first student to die in police gunfire in 1976". The observation can be made that when displayed next to the picture of Pieterson, open to 'his' page, the names recorded as 'Unknown' are further silenced as their inquests never managed to trace their individual identities. There are some instances however where the 'Unknown' record have either names added later, presumably once their bodies had been claimed by friends or relatives, but the large majority of these cases are empty of any referrals.

The Ledger as an object carries a very different contingency to the the other objects that it was exhibited next to. In a sense it is far more violent, not because it power it

carries, like a traditional weapon, but because it is accumulated evidence of the violence done to maintain the ideological status quo of apartheid. The voting booth could either be considered a trite contrast to the nameless victims of apartheid whose death is recorded in the Ledger, or a metaphorical counterpoint. It can be suggest that the intention of David Saks, the curator of the exhibition, was to attempt to reconstruct a narrative of how those violently marginalised by apartheid found democratic agency in South Africa's new political dispensation. At best the arrangement of the comparison is a literal one; from the violence of the struggle comes the gain of a democratic vote, where anonymity grants freedom to live in a equal country.

As a document, the Ledger is however more complex than any of the other images and objects it was displayed next to; as an index of violence it nevertheless exposes how the image of Pieterson has flattened the history of the struggle into memory. Here the memory of Pieterson made iconic by Nzima's photograph, when seen against the other objects as they were displayed in 'Road to Democracy', illustrates how memory is the process of actively forgetting and excluding. When seen in this context the Ledger is a somewhat almost ironic testament to this active forgetting in the anonymous names that dwelling in the shadow of Nzima's photograph, recalling Nora's observation that "memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects" and "history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and relations between things" (Nora, 1997: 9).

As the museum attempted to shift its discourse to a present a more 'inclusive' representation of South African history, the modes inherent in this kind of knowledge production placed memory, rather history at the center of the museum's ideological shift. As Carolyn Hamilton has noted in her paper 'Against the Museum as Chameleon' (1994), the various exhibits were "inconsistent in form", employing a range of display conventions that was "weakly linked in terms of content", having the overall effect for some viewers of incoherence (Hamilton, 1994: 188).

Extending her criticism, she likens the Museum to a chameleon which changes its colors to fit into the new social and political order, posing the following questions;

> Is it inherent in the nature of museums that they are chameleons, always in colour harmony with the hegemonic view? And following from that, does it mean that museums can never be in the forefront of any challenges to, or changes in, that hegemony; that they are confined continually to a situation of 'lag', of always presenting a dated orthodoxy, canonising the outcomes of past struggles over the interpretation of the past? (Hamilton, 1994: 188).

The Ledger's use as an object in the display on 'Road to Democracy' pejoratively answers these questions; instead of challenging the way that Nzima's photograph has been used and interpreted, it merely perpetuates the hegemonic status of Pieterson as an icon of the struggle. Rather than providing room for interpretation, the cause and effect strategy of the display of the Ledger in this type of context can be seen a literal 'lag', behind which dated orthodoxies are used to tell linear narratives that flatten the complexities of the past.

The archival potential of the Ledger has been flattened in this way where it has been used to further the representation of Hector Pieterson as a symbol that speaks for the many unnamed voices of the dead that it documents. The next section will extend this line of thought by looking at the process in which the Ledger has been further flattened through the presence of Kendell Geers. Regarding it as an artwork simply fashions an old orthodoxy that reduces the archival trace within the Ledger.

Geers' choice of nominating the Ledger was deliberate, based on the already accrued currency of Pieterson. In terms of South African history 1976 is a significant year and the Ledger as a bureaucratic *Doodsondersoeke Register* reflects such historical gravity associated with that date. Yet the question that must be examined is, as a object that is intertwined with Pieterson and the events of the Soweto Uprising, how does Geers' appropriation effect the way we see the Ledger; do we look at the information it contains differently or do we fall into the trap of immediately wanting to see Pieterson's name? Finally, what also must be asked is what regard is given to Geers'

stamp? Does it sanctify the object or does his presence that limit an understanding of the Ledger as having other and multiple histories and lives?

5. Provenance: *Untitled (1976)* vs *MA-1994-211*

Since the Road to Democracy exhibition in 1994, when the Ledger was last on view to the public, it has remained in the Museum Africa collection. Removed from display in 1997 it has, since then, frequently been referred to in a number of essays as *Untitled 1976* (1993). Although contained within the collection of the Museum this would nevertheless suggest that its status as an artwork by Kendell Geers has been maintained by commentators. In what follows I will discuss how it has been been positioned as as artwork in order to illustrate how seeing the Ledger as an object with a linear contingency that goes from apartheid and Pieterson to Geers and Museum Africa reduces the potential of its interpretation as an archival document with multiple stories and temporalities.

Ruth Kerkham (Simboa) addressed the Ledger in its form as *Untitled 1976* (1993) in her paper titled "There's a Bomb in This Exhibition: Kendell Geers Charged" (2000). Opening her paper Kerkham highlights the fact that Geers' artistic production is intimately tied up to the construction of his own personal mythology saying that "he weaves an intricate and deliberately ambiguous web of personal mythology, unwittingly capturing numerous critics and viewers who read his personal stories as they would have read Joseph Beuys' stories thirty years ago" (Kerkham, 2000: 30). This is important for an understanding of the Ledger as an artwork because it is the mythology of Geers that shifts it from an archival document to a flattened object.

As she further notes "however, unlike Beuys, Geers heightens the artificiality of his self-portrayal, and yet the constructedness of his work and his personal story is too often missed" (2000: 30). This artificiality of Geers' self portrayal emerges in the way he situates himself within South African history and how, through his interpretation of such a narrative, he manipulates the modes of his own artistic production to construct

the cult of his artistic personality. Beginning within a larger framework that takes its reference from global events Kerkham writes:

> He purportedly changed his own birthdate as an artistic performance to coincide with the 1968 student uprising in Paris, the activities of the Situationist International group founded by Guy Debord, and with the death of Marcel Duchamp. In all catalogues and articles his birthdate is listed as May 1968, and the artist wears this date around his neck engraved on a dog chain that will be auctioned when he dies (Kerkham, 2000: 31).

Furthering this mythology in a local context, Geers makes strategic use of his own racial currency "openly lamenting the fact that he will forever carry the cross of being a white, Afrikaans, South African male and that no matter how transgressive he might be, he will always be implicated in the atrocities of apartheid" (Kerkham, 2000: 31). Geers has found significant milage from this type of posturing with the majority of his early work directly addressing the socio-political dimensions of South Africa as it experienced democratic change. Yet, in his avoidance of traditional materials Geers situates his production by using conceptually loaded objects that would lend themselves to a politicized reading of the country's politics at the time which his appropriation of the Ledger attests to.

Writing on *Untitled 1976* (1993) Kerkham suggests that "in the piece", Geers enacts a "ideological and historical postmortem" (Kerkham, 2000: 40). Locating the discursive currency of the Ledger with of Hector Pieterson's name, Kerkham notes of the Soweto Uprising that: "While many people were killed and injured, the name Hector Pieterson is particularly well known due to a now famous photograph seen worldwide of his sister running away with his bleeding body in her arms" (Kerkham, 2000: 40). Giving further currency to the Ledger's appropriation by Geers she also notes that before the elections of 1994 the "old" government undertook a mass destruction of sensitive documents that might be used as incriminating evidence by the "new" government. Kerkham then suggests that "by displaying the book Geers attempts to dig deeper than a media portrayal, which, through tireless repetition eventually becomes distanced from the event itself" (Kerkham, 2000: 41). Whilst this reflects the

territory that has been already been explored, Kerkham's next assertion presents some issues to discuss.

> Attempting to go beyond a sensationalised view of violence, the death register points to the fact that some of the bodies remained nameless, and that even when they were named the causes of death were at times ruthlessly made up so as to avoid culpability on behalf of the government. Postmortems were often faked, miscarrying the entire system of justice, but here Geers dissects the systems of power themselves, revealing a multiplicity of crimes beyond the actual Soweto shooting (2000: 41).

It could be argued that as it was Geers' intention to exhibit the Ledger as a closed book, the disclosure that Kerkham suggests does not occur. The dissection of the systems of power can rather be said to represent a perpetuation of them rather than an active critique. Geers' stamps that authorise the Ledger as artwork align themselves with those that reflect the institutions of the apartheid government under whose jurisdiction the Ledger was produced. The authority that ratifies the document's position within the institution has merely shifted rather than been interrogated. Geers' authorial nomination that grants the Ledger its status as an artwork within the institution of art acts to effectively and further silence the other names in the Ledger. By isolating an individual document as part of his own narrative of production and suggesting that in such a way this action is an in-depth interrogation of apartheid violence is an artistic conceit that, contrary to Kerkhams assertion, relies on the currency of sensationalism associated with 1976 and Pieterson rather moving beyond it.

Kerkham does go on to maintain that "the fact, however, that this event is so utterly chilling makes the act of viewing the death register ominously voyeuristic, and the further removed the viewer is from the event the more voyeuristic the viewing potentially becomes" (Kerkham, 2000: 41). Here it can be suggested that the currency of the Ledger-as-artwork resides in its conspicuous relationship to a history that is familiar to South Africans. However the critical point that Kerkham raises is the voyeurism that comes with viewing the Ledger in the particular context of the white cube as a part of the artistic production of Geers' oeuvre. As she notes; "It is important, as such, to be acutely aware of the potential violation maintained in an

exhibition space, which is not simply a white cube in a zero-referential sphere" (Kerkham, 2000: 42). The white cube brings with it a certain separation of context, particularly in South Africa during this period, thus accentuating the distance from the event that potentially elevates the level of voyeurism Kerkham refers to. Here the mediated voyeurism produced by *Untitled 1976* (1993) only adds to the sensationalism of violence, not venturing further into the hermeneutics contained in the archival potential of the object.

A year after this paper was published, Okwui Enwezor curated the large scale exhibition titled the 'The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945 - 1994' where *Untitled 1976* (1993) was purportedly shown although the only work of Geers' that is documented in the catalogue is a video installation titled *My Traitors Heart*. However in his essay titled 'Modern African Art' in the exhibition catalogue Chika Okeke does allude to the work saying that: "In South Africa, Kendell Geers creates installations using declassified documents of the apartheid regime and, like other South African artists, adds his voice to the national discourse in the post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission era" (Okeke, 2001: 35). Here a facsimile the Ledger was presumably shown in the section of the exhibition titled 'Towards Independence and Liberation' where it was used together with other documents in a "multimedia archive which provides new evidence for a 'biography' of the African continent, which retrospectively outlines the interplay of culture, politics and art in building a new social space by Africans and for Africans" (Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 2001). By engaging with historical, political and social currency the aesthetic merits of Geers' intervention are reconfigured by the archival and biographical potential that the Ledger represents.

The Ledger then makes another appearance the following year in the full length survey catalogue of Geers titled 'My Tongue in Your Cheek' (2002:198). Here it is not referred to in any of the accompanying texts but is illustrated with an image of the document sitting closed atop a table (see figure 12, overleaf). The page where the Ledger is reproduced is divided in half; beneath the image of the closed object is the a detail of the record of Hector Pieterson's name.

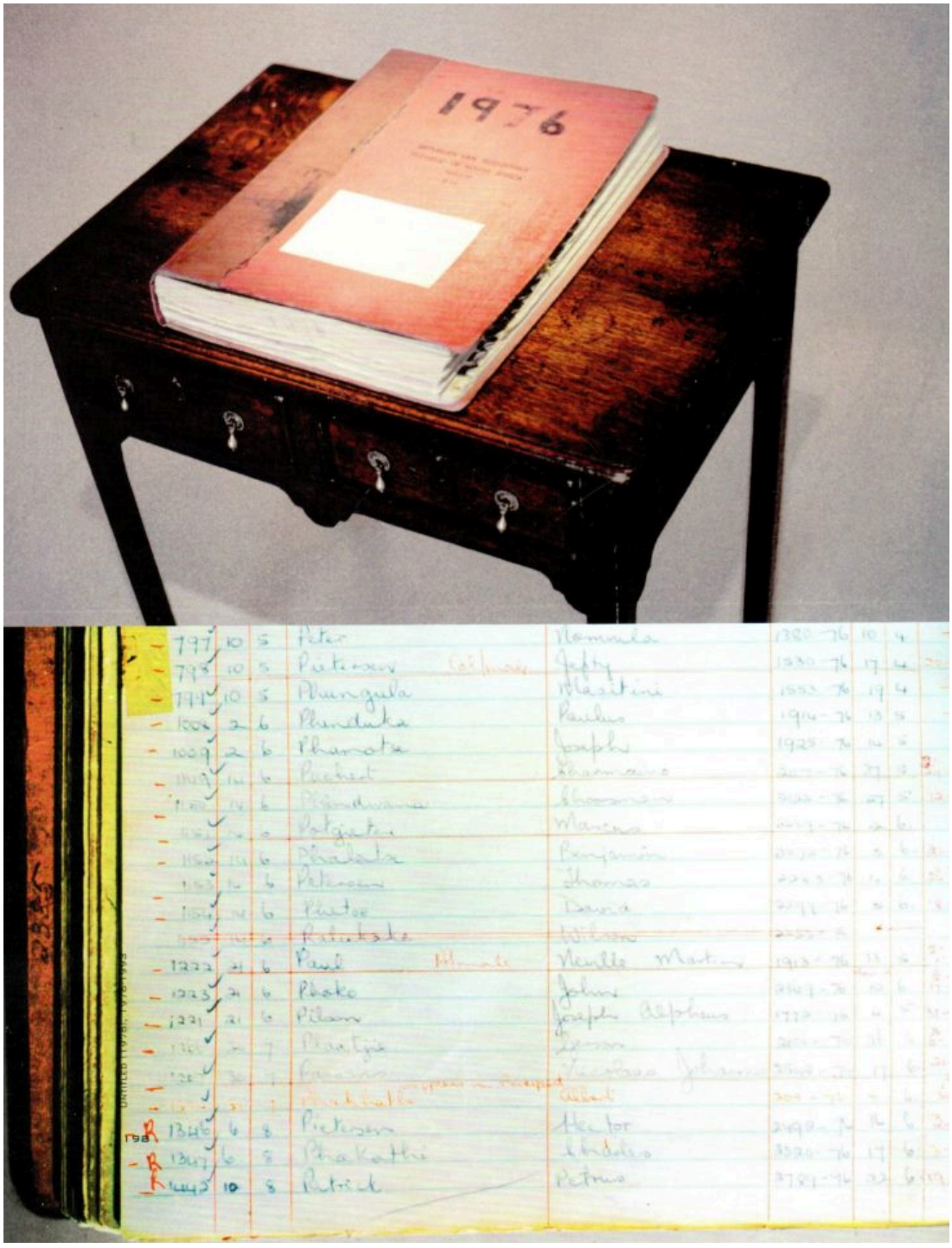


Figure 12. Kendell Geers. *Untitled 1976* (1993) *illustrated in My Tongue in Your Cheek* p.118

On the opposite page is the reproduction of a polaroid in which a child (alledgely Geers' himself) is seen holding a crocodile in a pose reminiscent of Pieterson being held by Makhubu in Nzima's photograph.

Printed on the white strip of the polaroid beneath the image is the title of the work that reads 'june seventy six'. The image, as is common with polaroid cameras, has been taken with a flash resulting in the background being obscured by darkness. Yet visible are other children, some of whom smile at the camera. The caption that details the work's title "*June Seventy Six*" indicates that the work was 'produced' in 1988. Here it is important to note the positioning of this self portrait together with the Ledger would suggest the disparities of Geers' own experiences as a white South African approximately the same age as Pieterson during this point in South African history. What it these two images do side by side is to point to the fact of Geers' albeit unconscious complicity in the system of apartheid, revealing the different experiences of the South African subject during such a history.

However, the two images side by side point to something different. As attention is directed towards Pieterson's name as the defining predicate within the Ledger a singular narrative again emerges. Coupled with to the self-portrait which reveals Geers as a child naive of the political context on the country that he was growing up in, what begins to emerge is how the Ledger finds its place as a orientating point for the artists own self-authored mythology. As Fiona Bradley writes: "Geers is both a lier and a lie, a persona as much as a person. He is an authorial voice constructed in and for the artist's work, an identity almost every element of which is assumed" (Bradley 2002: 211). With this observation one cant help but read Geers' appropriation and authorial nomination of the Ledger as a means through which to cultivate his own narrative artistic production as an agent-provocateur. Thus the sensationalism of looking at the Ledger and Pieterson becomes even more apparent given his inclusion into such a context. It can be suggested that Geers' invests in the currency of Pieterson as his ideological 'other' in order to illustrate his own (unwitting) complicity in the mechanisms of apartheid. As Badley further states:

> Geers' fictional autobiography is part of an integrated strategy, describing as it does an artist whose work relies on quotation, appropriation and redirection, a multiple layering of authorial position and artistic truth. To achieve it, he employs several methods, notably violence and the threat of conceptual and physical harm, but his target is overwhelmingly the concept of stable identity, the specific identities under threat most often that of the speaking subject and authorial voice (Bradly, 2002: 211).

This can be seen in another essay written by Warren Siebrits for Geers' catalogue 'Irrespktiv' (2007).[35] Opening this essay, titled 'Aspects of Kendell Geers' Art Production Whilst Living in South Africa 1988 - 1998', Siebrits recall how Geers introduced himself at the Ikapa Sessions in 2006 where he stated:

> I make art about the community I was born into in South Africa, white, paranoid suburban people. I make art about their fears, their paranoia, their desires as well as their inability to see past their electric fence (Geers in Siebrits, 2007: 29).

At the outset of this paper Siebrits goes on to explore the conditions of a "white, suburban, Afrikaans speaking kid born in the late 60's growing up in the 70's and 80's". Wanting to dispel the myth that the white community stood united during apartheid, Siebrits states that: "it is also important to highlight the difference in attitude between parents and the youth growing up during our generation in South Africa and how these differences shaped and evolved artistic expression during this period, particularly during the 80's" (Siebrits, 2007: 29). Furthering the notion that Geers uses his own identity as a platform that informs his work, Siebrits goes to some pains to illustrate how Geers' Afrikaner identity formed the basis of his work. Charting the history of the settlement of South Africa by the of the Boers and the British, Siebrits makes the observation that the more conservative Afrikaners were, before the depression of 1930, generally more rurally settled whereas the English were more urban. He goes on to note that:

> These very differences are central to and inform many of the social and political realities that define the white South Africa of the twentieth century.

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35 Siebrits was the curator of the Everard Read Contemporary Gallery at the time of the Ledger's exhibition and facilitated its sale to Museum Africa.

> The black African population groups were victims of the friction between the English and Afrikaans speaking whites in South Africa. The friction was also the impetus for the creation of apartheid with its institutionalised racial and cultural discrimination which lasted 46 years in South Africa (Siebrits, 2007: 31).

Describing apartheid as an 'indelible stain', Siebrits asserts that "Kendell's role as an artist working in South Africa between 1988 and 1998 was to use his art to examine the nature of this indelible stain - this mark of history, which still haunts the national psyche today" (Siebrits, 2007: 31).

> Kendell's chosen mode of expression during this period was the found object which had been marginally altered or rectified. This process would dynamically challenge the viewers reading of mundane everyday objects, thereby uncovering its true meaning in the context of the socio-political context of the day. Bricks, Bibles, government letters and documents, tyres, candles, cultural weapons, political identity cards and broken bottles were some of the items selected by Kendell to convey his thoughts about life growing up in apartheid South Africa. His best works from this period present powerful distillations that define aspects about the bizarre reality of life in apartheid South Africa (Siebrits, 2007: 31).

What is evident from this quote is Geers' appropriation of everyday objects that he would incorporate into his narrative of production in order to critique the socio-political discrepancies of South African history. Beginning to specifically address the Ledger, Siebrits first provides a contextual backdrop of the events of June 16th 1976 giving figures of the amount of bullets fired into the crowds and the number of dead that were recorded.[36] Then, furthering the narrative cultivated by Geers he then proceeds to note how Geers would incorporate the Ledger into his production saying that:

> These painful reminders of the past would re-emerge in 1993 when Kendell found the official mortuary register from the 1976 Soweto riots on a rubbish

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36 According to figures released by the South African Police Service (SAPS), more than 16 000 rounds of ammunition were fired in Soweto alone, killing 172 blacks and injuring 1 439 others. Prof J.J.F. Taljaard, the head State Pathologist declared that 229 post mortems were performed between 18 June and 18 August on the Johannesburg West Rand. Of these, about two thirds of the people had died of gunshot wounds. In the Johannesburg area 68 were found to have been shot from behind.

> dump in Newtown, Johannesburg. *Untitled (1976)* utilized one of the most sinister found objects ever to be exhibited in South Africa.
>
> It was written in the same hand by an office clerk whose job it was to keep the register up to date. All the entries were in alphabetical order with some marked with a red 'R' in the margin. This indicated someone who had died from a direct result of rioting. On closer scrutiny Kendell was shocked to find Hector Pieterson's name clearly recorded in blue ink (Siebrits, 2007: 39).

What this text achieves is to further the myth developed around Geers' appropriation of the Ledger into his artistic production by perpetuating the narrative he created. What it also illustrates is the currency of the record of Pieterson's death that Geers' used when nominating the Ledger as an artwork. The elaboration of this mythology goes further when Siebrits attempts to justify the Ledger's status as an artwork saying that, in a climate of the mass destruction of records by the state as apartheid drew to a close, "the discovery of the document and its subsequent exhibition at The Everard read Contemporary in Rosebank posed many uncomfortable questions for the South African public at large" (Siebrits, 2007: 39).

Of the "many uncomfortable questions" that Siebrits identifies in the exhibition of the Ledger, he asks only two: "Why had the document been discarded in such a careless and callous manner? Why was Hector Pieterson's body brought to a mortuary in Newtown, a great distance from where he died in Soweto?" (Siebrits, 2007: 39). It would appear that the first of these two questions will remain unanswered in the remaining course of the Ledger's life. Simply put, as the document should have been destroyed in 1986, it was fortuitous that it was not and can possibly be attributed to the fact that in the mass destruction of records by the apartheid state, the Ledger's survival was due to a backlog of insufficient state resources.

In terms of the second question that Siebrits sees the exhibition of the Ledger raising: 'Why was Hector Pieterson's body brought to a mortuary in Newtown, a great distance from where he died in Soweto?' it would seem that this line of questioning fails to understand the records contained within the Ledger's pages as well as the processes carried out by the apartheid authorities at the time. Reading the Ledger

alone it is impossible to tell where the body was taken to after death. As records of the events of June 16th 1976 show, Sophie Tema, a journalist working for *The World* newspaper took Pieterson's body which was accompanied by Makhubu and his sister Antoinette to Phomolong Clinic where he was declared dead upon arrival. Yet Siebrits goes on further to conjecture that:

> On further investigation it turned out that a *remote* mortuary in a whites-only, non-residential part of Johannesburg had been selected to house many of the dead from the Soweto uprisings. As relatives of the deceased would only think of looking at local mortuaries in Soweto, no bodies could be identified and located immediately. Even worse, the Pass Law System prohibited black people to enter these area's. By placing the bodies in a remote mortuary the number of reported dead would be reduced. The thinking was to reduce the levels of anger, hostility and resentment in the townships towards officials in the aftermath of the unrest (Siebrits, 2007: 40).

It is true that many bodies were taken to state mortuaries in the centre of Johannesburg and that due to the accumulation of the dead many were unable to access their friends and relatives. However, to say that the 'exhibition of the Ledger at the Everard Read Contemporary in Rosebank' brought these 'uncomfortable questions' to the 'South African public at large' is perhaps an over estimation of both who the exhibiting of the Ledger would reach as well as the effect of Geers' authorial nomination of the object as artwork would have over the information contained within its pages. Speaking of the states failed attempt to retrieve the Ledger in the form of Marie Olivier's letter to Trent Read Siebrits suggests that:

> The sphere of legislative and constitutional power of the once feared and reviled apartheid juggernaut had come to a halt. *Untitled (1976)* was purchased in May 1994 by MuseumAfrika in Newtown and is now held less than a kilometer from the Newtown Mortuary - whose staff originally discarded the item in the first place. The sinister pathology of the apartheid era ended with the dawning of the New South Africa. However, the violence, injustice and horror suppressed and condensed in a document of this nature can never be diminished by the passage of time (Siebrits, 2007: 40).

Whilst it is true that the Ledger does represent a condensation of the violence and horror of the apartheid era, the sinister pathology nevertheless remerges in the

document through its status as an artwork. Through the sensationalized position of the Ledger within the narrative of Kendell Geers' ouevre there is a conceptual violence that flattens the narrative of the other records it contains, limiting an interpretation to the accumulation of the Ledger's outward signs which rely on 1976 and Hector Pieterson.

Similarly, its position in the Museum also relies on the same currency that Geers' identified when he chose to elevate the object to an artwork. Yet Geers' position has little context in that space save only for the fact that his name is recorded in the material traces where the Ledger's purchase was recorded. Yet these two narratives do intersect. In the final stages of the its biography, Geers and Museum Africa come together a final time when the Ledger's value is determined by the historical criteria set first by Geers and then only by Pieterson. Again this is recorded in a document; specifically a letter asking for the loan of the Ledger, referred to now simply as *Untitled (Death Register)*.

Conclusion

1. Specters of Biography

As this study has discussed, objects contain multiple and intersecting biographies gathered over the course of their lives that shift and further increase the possibilities for interpretation. As a deconstructional tool, the biography of an objects allow us to pull back from their immediate context to more fully examine how they reflect the political and social circumstances in which they are found.

Like the foundational ideas of Kopytoff (1986) who, considering an object's biography, "felt that things could not be fully understood at just one point in their existence and processes and cycles of production, exchange and consumption had to be looked at as a whole", so this study has applied the notion that, whilst objects change through the course of their existence, so too do they have the "capability of accumulating histories, so that the present significance of an object derives from the persons and events to which it is connected" (Gosden and Marshall, 1999: 170). Thus the Ledger has come to be seen in its various points in its history echoing Gosden and Marshall's notion that:

> the fame of objects and the renown of people are mutually creating, so that objects gain value through links to powerful people and an individual's standing is enhanced through possession of well-known objects. There is a mutual process of value creation between people and things" (Gosden and Marshall, 1999: 170).

In its first life the Ledger was seen to embody the exceptional nature of apartheid violence through the records of inquests into unnatural deaths that it documents. Here its connection to another apartheid era document, specifically the Cillié Commission of Inquiry, highlighted that the exceptionalism used to enforce the status quo of apartheid had legislative recourse that attempted to conceal or diminish the state of exception within the political order of apartheid. In Chapter One then the Ledger was viewed as a site where the state of apartheid exceptionalism is revealed by its compression.

Chapter Two and Three then, in different ways, looked at the process whereby the Ledger began to gather links to "powerful people" thus enhancing an individuals standing through their connection to an object. In the case of Pieterson, his status already elevated by Nzima's photographic depiction of his death comes to have the action of silencing the other records of the Ledger because of the prominence of his iconic narrative in the liberation struggle against apartheid.

In the case of Geers, the action of inserting his own narrative into that of the Ledger has resulted in the Ledger being seen not merely as archival document but now as an artwork imbued with the aesthetic significance that functions similarly to Nzima's photograph. Pieterson's narrative was propelled by this visual representation to provide a visual index to the struggle that came to silence the other records in the Ledger, in a manner speaking for them. Similarly, this photograph has come to displace the depictions of the struggle by standing as iconic point of entry into the documentary oeuvre of this period in South Africa.

Chapter Four then explored how the cycles of production, exchange and consumption has complicated the reading of the Ledger as an archival document, highlighting the conflicting readings of what it represents as artwork and as a historical piece of paraphernalia used to contextualise Pieterson's narrative. Here by looking at the Ledger closed as Geers intended it to be exhibited and open to the entry of Pieterson as the it was shown at the Museum Africa, essentially we are confronted by the same fetish; determined by the indexical regime of the photograph as an icon of the struggle the Ledger, both in the form of *Untitled 1976* (1993) and MA-1994-211 has its interpretation limited by the investment created by Pieterson's narrative.

This connection of the Ledger to Geers and Pieterson seems destined to run *ad infinitum* in the course of its remaining life with the selective fetish that Geers has brought into view being the constant recourse to the way that the Ledger is seen and interpreted. In what follows it will be seen that despite his original intention for the Ledger to be exhibited closed, which would perhaps defer the attention away from Pieterson and onto the accumulation of records of inquests into unnatural deaths in the

Ledger, Geers has nevertheless succumbed to the impulse of representing the visual trace of Pieterson's name.

2. One Life to Speak for Others

Visual representations have formed the core of this study, both in how they construct narratives and how they complicate interpretations of those narratives. To conclude I want to trace the representation of the Ledger where a facsimile, not the actual document was exhibited under the title given by Geers *Untitled 1976* (1993). This can be seen as the final life in this particular biography of the Ledger, because here it has run its course and remains an a object sitting silently in the collection of a Museum. Despite this, its image and the page that contains Pieterson's entry have been reproduced by Geers on an exhibition further reasserting his authorship over the document and perpetuating the fetish around the entry and myth of Pieterson. Like the other phases in the Ledger's life this begins with a material trace of another object alluded to at the end of the last chapter.

On the 29th of November 2012, Diana Wall, the Manager of Collections at the Museum Africa received a letter from another familiar name in the Ledger's biography; Okwui Enwezor (see appendix 3). Writing in his capacity as the Director of the Haus der Kunst in Munich Enwezor was requesting the loan of the Ledger which he describes as *Untitled (Death Register)*. The Ledger, as Enwezor states in the letter was intended to be used on the upcoming show of selected works by Kendell Geers. The exhibition charts Geers' work from the periods of 1988 - 2012 and was split into two distinct periods; the first from 1988 - 2000 which is described as his South African periods:

> The first political phase runs from 1988 to 2000, during which time the artist, a white South African, explored the moral and ethical contradictions of the apartheid system through his practice. Geers developed a visual vocabulary characterized by provocation as well as humor by using found objects such as barbed wire or glass shards. By appropriating historical events and ideas, he focused on questions of relationship between individual and society (Enwezor, 2012)

The Ledger's status as a found object represents the appropriation of a historical event, namely the Soweto Uprising of 1976, but more specifically this relationship is between two individuals, Pieterson and Geers. However what is at stake are those voices of society in the margins that are neglected by such a relationship. As Harris states of an archivist; "of crucial importance (is that) they are bound by the principle of hospitality to "otherness." They respect every "other," invite every "other" in to the archive" (Harris, 2002: 85). This perhaps is more relevant for this research but in terms of Geers' and Pietersons relationship in the Ledger and to society at a broader level, the imperitave needs to be shifted to reframe and readdress the other marginalized voices within the object itself.

What is also distressing, to certain degree is how the framing of the questions that both Geers and the Museum ask of the Ledger also willingly, if not consciously, silence the other voices in its margins. Whenever describing the Ledger in terms its status as a found object within Geers' work and as a piece of historical paraphernalia, Hector Pieterson is never far away. He is invariably listed as the first victim of the 1976 uprising and as the curator the show 'Kendell Geers: 1988 - 2012', Clive Kellner writes, he "became a symbol of the liberation struggle and resistance against apartheid and immortalized in an infamous image by documentary photographer Sam Nzima" (Kellner, 2012: 11).

Katerina Gregos repeats this kind of narrative describing the action of Geers' work as "political conceptualism with clear Duchampian roots" (Gregos in Kellner, 2012: 211). Describing the Ledger as a death register displayed on a simple wooden table her text reproduces the myth surrounding the Ledger as artwork.[37] As she further writes: "In an uncanny twist of fate, the artist himself recounts, he found the book in a dumping site...but this is no ordinary record. In it is inscribed the name of a black boy, Hector Pieterson, a name that became synonymous with the crushing violence of apartheid" (Gregos in Kellner, 2012: 211). Yet the text, which is resembles many of

[37] As it will be discussed only a reproduction of the Ledger was displayed in a glass vitrine.

those written about Geers and the Legder's relationship, goes further to express the extent to which the other voices in the document have been silenced:

> The red "R" next to the names of the victims of the Soweto Uprising is the only document of their existence, as there is no other documents of those who died. The work is the only evidence and archive of all the victims of the June 1976 riots, an as such also constitutes important historical evidence. Geers' appropriation of and display of the register is an act of preserving a historical and political memory that others deliberately chose to forget. It is both a symbolic artistic act and one of the re-instatement of memory as well as selective amnesia" (Gregos in Kellner, 2012: 211).

It can be argued that the fact is quite to the contrary. By reinstating this 'memory' which takes as its predicate, the myth of both Kendell Geers and Hector Pieterson the result is precisely forgetting and further marginalizing the other names that exist in the fringes of the Ledger. As discussed in the first chapter, there are other, albeit officially sanctioned records of those names in the Cillié Commission report. Thus the resistance to selective amnesia becomes not only greatly apparent but fails in the action of the Ledger moving from archival record to artwork because it relies on a further narrative, not only of Pieterson, but of Geers which sanitizes later interpretation. In this exhibition at Haus der Kunst from which Gregos text comes, only a facsimile of the Ledger was shown, notably the page containing Pieterson's name.

Enwezor's request for the loan of the Ledger from Museum Africa was referred to the South African History Resources Agency (SAHRA) on Friday the 11 January, 2013. The proposal description reads:

> Permission is requested for Museum Africa to loan the work "Untitled(1976)" by Kendell Geers, which is a mortuary register containing the entry for Hector Pieterson, killed in the Soweto Student Uprising, accession number MA1994-211, to the Haus de Kunst in Munich for an exhibition on Kendell Geers for the duration 23 January to 31 May 2013. The Haus de Kunst in Munich, Germany will be hosting a Kendell Geers exhibition showing both his South African political work, and installations done in Europe since 2000 and would like to include the register in their exhibition. The exhibition is being curated by well-regarded curators Okwui Enwezor and Clive Kellner. They are asking to borrow the register (MA-1994-211) for the period 23 January to 31

> May 2013. (See loan request letter). The item has been valued at R50 000 and will be insured by the Haus de Kunst both while on display and in transit. Haus de Kunst have agreed to pay for a courier to accompany the work. The shipping agent in South Africa will be Eugene Botha of Fine Art Logistics who will liaise with the German shippers Hasenkamp (http://www.sahra.org.za/cases/permit-museum-africa-lend-ma1994-211-1976-mortuary-register-hector-pietersen-entry-haus-de).

The reason for this request is that according to the National Historical Resources Authority 32(19), "No person may export or attempt to export from South Africa any heritage object without a permit issued by SAHRA". The final decision on this permit was made by the committee of the APM HOB (Archaeology, Palaeontology, Meteorites, Heritage Objects and Burials) on Friday, January 18, 2013 where the loan request of the Ledger was not granted.[38]

In reflection of the archival attentiveness contained in the competing biographies contained in this process, Harris issues an impossible challenge, he asks that the archivist (and not the least the writer of such a conflation of biographies), "whether they are making records available, or describing records, or appraising record-keeping systems, they listen intently for the voices of those who are marginalised or excluded by prevailing relations of power" (Harris, 2002: 81).

Speaking of the impossibility of such a task Harris point to the limits of what reading the Ledger as an archival fragment constituting a bigger narrative of the way Geers has actuated his critique of memory and politics of South Africa during this period. As Harris asks; "How to invite in what is always beyond the limits of understanding? How to avoid the danger of speaking for these other voices? How to avoid reinforcing marginalisation by naming "the marginalised" as such? (Harris, 2002: 82). In a sense all these dangers have been realised in the course of the Ledger's movements through the archive in the form of an artwork by Geers as well as an object used to provide museological context; what has been spoken to and for is the name of Pieterson and

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[38] At a meeting of an SAHRA advisory panel on January 16 it is noted that: "According to experts, a temporary export permit can be issued in this regard as requested by Museum Africa" http://www.sahra.org.za/content/109006. Although this temporary export permit for the loan of the ledger was granted by SAHRA, Museum Africa was however unable to process the application due to bureaucratic stalling in the supply chain management of the city of Johannesburg in order to grant permission for the Ledger to travel.

Geers' which has alienated the other names in the margins of the Ledger. A final thought then is for the records inside the Ledger as well as outside (in the Cillié Commission for instance) who have been absorbed, silenced and forgotten in this process.

Whilst it can be argued that Geers' has brought these issues to the surface and complicated a reading of the Ledger as an object with significant historical depth, Harris, turning to Gayatri Spivak issues a last warning that can be taken as a self-reflexive insight to the course that this research has charted. "Let us, then, for the moment at least, arrest the understandable need to fix and diagnose the identity of the most deserving marginal. Let us also suspend the mood of self-congratulation as saviours of marginality" (Spivak in Harris, 2002: 83).

3. The Immutable Trace

Despite the prominence of Pieterson and Geers' narrative given to the Ledger, there is further potential to shift the way in which the Ledger is understood as an object by investigating the names that have been pushed into the margins by the selective focus made possible by Nzima's lens. As some of the names at least exist outside the Ledger in other documents such as the Cillié Commission of Inquiry it is possible to use the Ledger in order to reconfigure the modes through which such a history has been constructed. Whilst the identity of the "most deserving marginal" has been fixed on Hector Pieterson, this study has made a case that this can be re-interrogated through the biography of the Ledger which, when approached with the awareness of the conflicts that arise out of its visibility determined by the prominence of such a narrative, the trace of the forgotten and the silenced can be explored in order to bring justice to the selective amnesia of post-apartheid memory.

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Appendices

Appendix 1.1: Cillié Commission of Inquiry - Annexure F: p. 34

6.8 SOWETO.

6.8.1 PERSONS KILLED BY THE POLICE.

Personal particulars			Medical jurisprudence particulars	Legal particulars	Factual particulars
(a) Name;	(b) race, sex and age;	date and place of (c) injury and/or (d) death;	(e) post-mortem number; (f) cause of death; (g) further particulars;	(h) inquest number; (i) finding; (j) further particulars;	(k) circumstances;
(a) AMATENDE, Elisa;	(b) Black female, 21 years;	(c) 76.09.17 Maretha; (d) 76.09.18 Leratong Hospital, Krugersdorp;	(e) 767/76; (f) gunshot wound in stomach; (g) -	(b) 56/77 Krugersdorp; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) the deceased was shot in a house near the Mapetla Secondary School during rioting at the aforementioned school.
(a) BARRON, James;	(b) Black male, 28 years;	(c) Area 6, Meadowlands; (d) 76.06.18, Soweto;	(e) 2672/76; (f) gunshot wound; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) circumstances not known.
(a) BOGALE, Meshack;	(b) Black male, 18 years;	(c) - (d) 76.08.26 Leratong Hospital, Krugersdorp;	(e) 714/76; (f) gunshot wound in head; (g) -	(h) 49/77; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) the deceased was killed by the SAP during the rioting.
(a) BUTHELEZI, alias Nkosi, Elliot;	(b) Black male, 27 years;	(c) - (d) 76.06.16 Soweto;	(e) 2467/76; (f) gunshot wounds; (g) concentration of alcohol in blood was 0,13 gm per 100 ml;	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) circumstances not known. The body of the deceased was taken to the Orlando Police Station by an unknown person.

(a) MOKAEANE, Justice;	(b) Black male, 21 years;	(c) - (d) 76.06.17 Naledi Railway Station;	(e) 2483/76; (f) gunshot wound in back; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) the deceased was presumably killed at a shopping centre in Klipspruit while a store was being burnt down.
(a) MOKOENA, Amos;	(b) Black male, 13 years;	(c) Klipspruit shopping centre; (d) 76.06.18 Soweto;	(e) 2585/76; (f) gunshot wound; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) -
(a) MOKOENA, Moses;	(b) Black male, 23 years;	(c) - (d) 76.06.17 Meadowlands;	(e) 2542/76; (f) gunshot wound in abdomen; (g) concentration of alcohol in blood was 0,18 gm per 100 ml;	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) circumstances not known. The body of the deceased was taken to the Meadowlands Police Station by an unknown person.
(a) MOKOENA, Vincent;	(b) Black male, 11 years;	(c) White City; (d) 76.06.16 Soweto;	(e) 2471/76; (f) multiple gunshot wounds; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) -
(a) MOLAPO, Lobian;	(b) Black male, 14 years;	(c) - (d) 76.09.14 Orlando East;	(e) 4415/76; (f) gunshot wounds; (g) -	(h) 2383/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) exact circumstances not known. Rioting was taking place.
(a) MOLEKO, Hendrik;	(b) Black male, 28 years;	(c) Beer Hall, Diepkloof; (d) 76.06.18 Diepkloof;	(e) 2578/76; (f) gunshot wound in chest; (g) concentration of alcohol in blood was 0,31 gm per 100 ml;	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) the body of the deceased was taken to the Meadowlands Police Station by an unknown person.

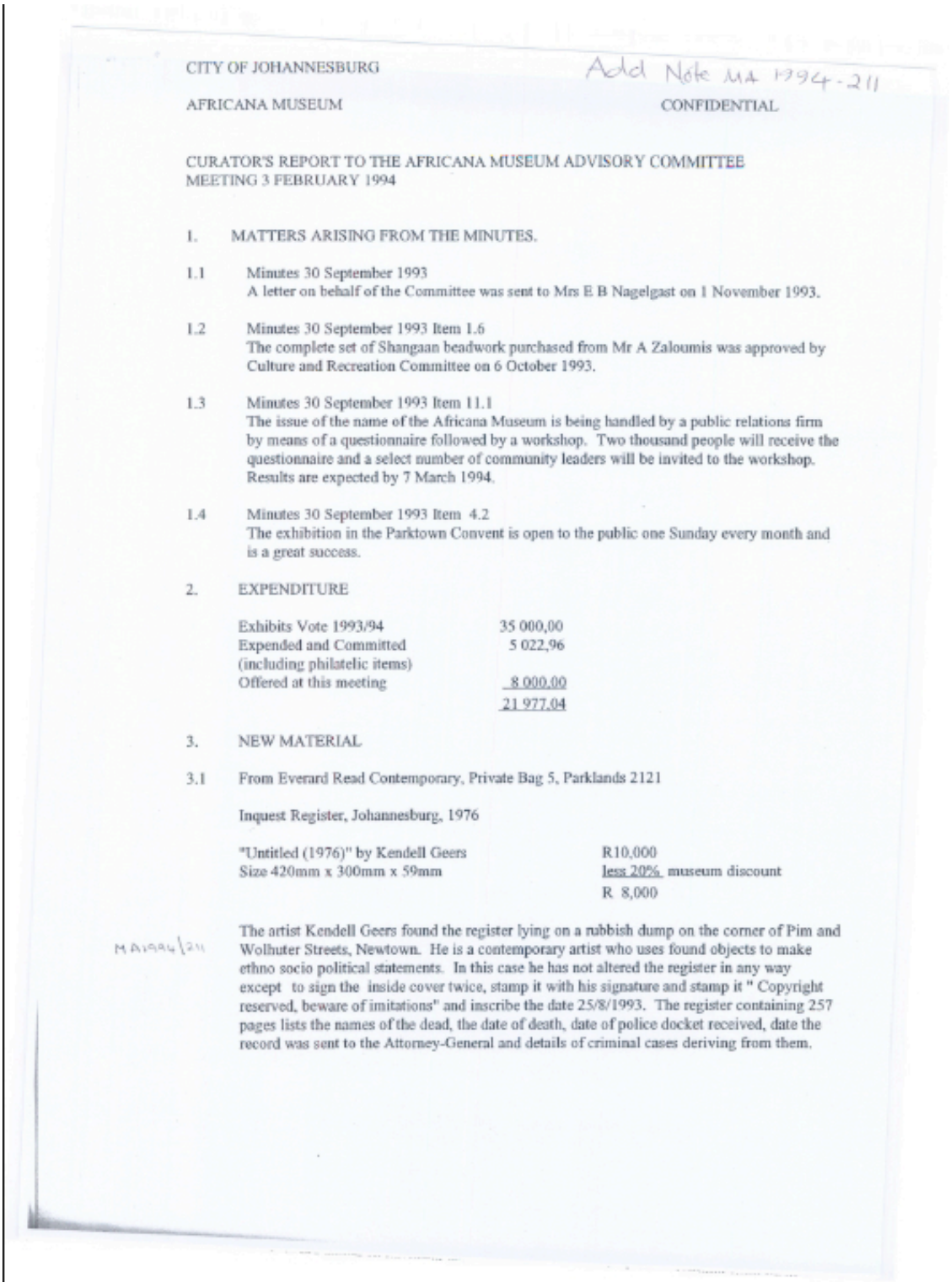
(a) NDHLOVU, Hastings;	(b) Black male, 17 years;	(c) - (d) 76.06.16 Orlando West, Soweto;	(e) 2487/76; (f) gunshot wound in head; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) no person is liable; (j) -	(k) the deceased was killed by the SAP while attacking them and inciting a crowd of stone-throwers.
(a) NDHLOVU, Jimmy;	(b) Black male, 12 years;	(c) - (d) 76.06.17 Store, Soweto;	(e) 2527/76; (f) gunshot wound in abdomen; (g) concentration of alcohol in blood was 0,08 gm per 100 ml;	(h) 1371/76; (i) no person is liable; (j) -	(k) the deceased was presumably killed during the looting of a store in Klipspruit.
(a) NDIBONGO, Michael;	(b) Black male, 26 years;	(c) Kliptown; (d) 76.06.19 Leratong Hospital, Krugersdorp;	(e) 488/76; Krugersdorp; (f) gunshot wound; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) circumstances not known. The body of the deceased was taken to the Leratong Hospital by an unknown person.
(a) NGABA, Wellington;	(b) Black male, 18 years;	(c) 76.06.17 Zondi; (d) 76.06.18 Baragwanath Hospital, Soweto;	(e) 2645/76; (f) gunshot wound in chest; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) circumstances not known. The deceased was transported in an injured state from a house to the Baragwanath Hospital.
(a) NGCOBO, Eric;	(b) Black male, 16 years;	(c) 76.08.25 Mofolo South; (d) 76.06.25 Baragwanath Hospital, Soweto;	(e) 4032/76; (f) gunshot wound in head; (g) -	(h) 2182/76; (i) no person is liable; (j) -	(k) the deceased was killed by the SAP during stone-throwing at the police.

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(a) NKUMALO, Alfred;	(b) Black male, 57 years;	(c) 76.08.25 Zola; (d) 76.08.26 Baragwanath Hospital, Soweto;	(e) 4023/76; (f) gunshot wound in abdomen; (g) -	(h) 2181/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) exact circumstances not known - rioting was taking place.
(a) NYELELE, Michael;	(b) Black male, 18 years;	(c) - (d) 76.08.25 Meadowlands;	(e) 3997/76; (f) gunshot wound in neck; (g) -	(h) 2178/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) exact circumstances not known - rioting was taking place.
(a) PENDELA, Nelson;	(b) Black male, 22 years;	(c) 76.06.18 Zola; (d) 76.06.18 Randfontein;	(e) 476/76 Krugersdorp; (f) gunshot wound in neck; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) -
(a) PHAKATHI, Charles;	(b) Black male, 22 years;	(c) Zola Bottle Store; (d) 76.06.17 Soweto;	(e) 2520/76; (f) gunshot wounds in abdomen and chest; (g) concentration of alcohol in blood was 0,03 gm per 100 ml;	(h) 1371/76; (i) no person is liable; (j) -	(k) the deceased was killed by the SAP during an attack with stones on the police at the Zola Bottle Store.
(a) PIETERSON, Hector;	(b) Black male, 12 years;	(c) 76.06.16 Orlando West High School; (d) 76.06.16 Phomolong Clinic, Soweto;	(e) 2492/76; (f) gunshot wound - entry wound right side of back; exit wound in neck; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) the deceased was shot dead by the police during a confrontation in front of the Orlando West Secondary School.

(a) UNKNOWN;	(b) Black male, 24 years;	(c) - (d) 76.06.17 Soweto;	(e) 2537/76; (f) gunshot wound in chest; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) -
(a) UNKNOWN;	(b) Black male, about 25 years;	(c) - (d) 76.10.23 Mapetla;	(e) 5084/76; (f) gunshot wounds; (g) -	(h) 3124/76; (i) no person is liable; (j) -	(k) the deceased was killed by the SAP while he was throwing stones at members of the public.
(a) UNKNOWN;	(b) Black male, 26 years;	(c) - (d) 76.09.17 Mozoka;	(e) 4477/76; (f) gunshot wound in head; (g) -	(h) 2756/76; (i) no person is liable; (j) -	(k) the deceased was killed by the SAP during stone-throwing at the police and at vehicles.
(a) UNKNOWN;	(b) Black male, about 26 years;	(c) 76.08.25 Merafe; (d) 76.08.26 Baragwanath Hospital, Soweto;	(e) 4059/76; (f) gunshot wound in head; (g) -	(h) 2873/76; (i) no person is liable; (j) -	(k) the deceased was killed by the SAP during an attack on members of the public and the police.
(a) UNKNOWN;	(b) Black male, 27 years;	(c) - (d) 76.06.17 Soweto;	(e) 2524/76; (f) gunshot wound; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) -
(a) UNKNOWN;	(b) Black male, 28 years;	(c) 76.06.16 (d) 76.06.17 Baragwanath Hospital, Soweto;	(e) 2488/76; (f) gunshot wound in chest; (g) -	(h) 1371/76; (i) liability cannot be determined; (j) -	(k) circumstances not known. The body of the deceased was taken to the Baragwanath Hospital by an unknown person.

Appendix 2: Curators Report to the Africana Museum Advisory Committee



CITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Add Note MA 1994-211

AFRICANA MUSEUM

CONFIDENTIAL

CURATOR'S REPORT TO THE AFRICANA MUSEUM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING 3 FEBRUARY 1994

1. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

1.1 Minutes 30 September 1993
A letter on behalf of the Committee was sent to Mrs E B Nagelgast on 1 November 1993.

1.2 Minutes 30 September 1993 Item 1.6
The complete set of Shangaan beadwork purchased from Mr A Zaloumis was approved by Culture and Recreation Committee on 6 October 1993.

1.3 Minutes 30 September 1993 Item 11.1
The issue of the name of the Africana Museum is being handled by a public relations firm by means of a questionnaire followed by a workshop. Two thousand people will receive the questionnaire and a select number of community leaders will be invited to the workshop. Results are expected by 7 March 1994.

1.4 Minutes 30 September 1993 Item 4.2
The exhibition in the Parktown Convent is open to the public one Sunday every month and is a great success.

2. EXPENDITURE

Exhibits Vote 1993/94	35 000,00
Expended and Committed (including philatelic items)	5 022,96
Offered at this meeting	8 000,00
	21 977,04

3. NEW MATERIAL

3.1 From Everard Read Contemporary, Private Bag 5, Parklands 2121

Inquest Register, Johannesburg, 1976

"Untitled (1976)" by Kendell Geers — R10,000
Size 420mm x 300mm x 59mm — less 20% museum discount
R 8,000

MA1994/211

The artist Kendell Geers found the register lying on a rubbish dump on the corner of Pim and Wolhuter Streets, Newtown. He is a contemporary artist who uses found objects to make ethno socio political statements. In this case he has not altered the register in any way except to sign the inside cover twice, stamp it with his signature and stamp it " Copyright reserved, beware of imitations" and inscribe the date 25/8/1993. The register containing 257 pages lists the names of the dead, the date of death, date of police docket received, date the record was sent to the Attorney-General and details of criminal cases deriving from them.

The year 1976 was a memorable one in Johannesburg's history because it was the year of the Soweto uprising. Many of the dead in this register appear with the letter "R" possibly indicating riot victims. Among them is the name of Hector Pietersen, the first victim of the Soweto riots on 16 June 1976. Most of the entries in the register are of black people. The register is certified for disposal by the Justice Department on 31 December 1986.

The Africana Museum is planning a display on "Political Transformations" for the opening exhibition and the Soweto uprising is integral to it. We have little material apart from photographs but this register would be a focal point. 1976 was a turning point in our history and this document should not be lost to the Johannesburg public at large. The Africana Museum is the right home for it.

IT IS RECOMMENDED : That the Inquest Register be bought from Everard Read Contemporary, Private Bag 5, Parklands 2121 for R8,000, subject to the approval of the Culture and Recreation Committee

APPROVAL OF ACTING CHIEF CURATOR'S LOAN

Johannesburg Emergency Services used one of the fire engines from the James Hall Museum of Transport at the tattoo held at the Johannesburg College of Education on 30 October 1993. The fire engine was returned to the Museum on 1 November 1993.

For the approval of the Committee

LOANS

Loan to Metavideo SP Producão e Comunicacao, (see letter)
Mr Rolando Graça Couto has written requesting the loan of fourteen original drawings of Brazil by W J Burchell (68/1552 - 1559, 68/1591; 68/1618 and 68/1645 - 1647). These would form part of a major exhibition on "The Voyagers' View Brazil" which will be held at the Sao Paulo Art Museum from 18 August to 29 September 1994, the Bahai Art Museum, Salvador, 20 October to 20 November 1994, the National Museum of fine Arts, Rio de Janeiro form 7 December 1994 to 22 January 1995 and probably in Lisbon, Portugal in March/April 1995.

"The Voyagers' View of Brazil" will have four thrusts: the exhibition, a book (in English, Spanish and Portuguese), a television series and an academic symposium. The "project aims to bring together a large number of meaningful works of art on Brazil which are presently despersed, identifying, documenting, evaluating and publicising them as an aesthetic and scientific whole." The exhibition will comprise about 300 works.

They have also asked for coloured transparencies of the fourteen works for reproduction in the book, of which 10,000 copies will be printed and distributed free to institutions and others who contributed to the project. The Africana Museum has had the colour transparencies made for them free of charge. (This was also done several years ago when a previous request to borrow all the Burchells of South America was rejected by this Committee. A book was published at that time too.) The Burchells of Brazil are important to the exhibition but the pictures are faint and the paper frail. The borrowers promise to take good care of them and bear all costs. Several other internationally known museums and galleries have been approached for loans.

Appendix 2.1: Minutes of a Meeting of the Africana Advisory Committee

CITY OF JOHANNESBURG CONFIDENTIAL

AFRICANA MUSEUM

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Africana Museum Advisory Committee held in the new Africana Museum on 3 February 1994 at 15:30

PRESENT: Mr N C Bloom, Cllr E Brink (Acting Chairman), Mrs H Bruce (Acting Chief Curator), Mrs O A Cronje, Prof A Dubb, Ms D Evenden, Mr R Jayaram (Director Libraries and Museums), Mr H Loots, Prof. J Mohlamme, Mrs C Woodward and Mrs L Steyn in attendance.

APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE were received from Dr I Norwich, Alderman W G J Janse van Rensburg

RESOLVED: That the persons listed above be granted leave of absence from the February meeting.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 1993 having been circulated were taken as read and confirmed.

Before the business of the meeting Mr R Jayaram was welcomed as the new director of Libraries and Museums by the Chairman.

1. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES Noted

1.1

2. EXPENDITURE Noted

3. NEW MATERIAL

From Everard Read Contemporary, Private Bag 5, Parklands 2121

Inquest Register, Johannesburg, 1976

"Untitled (1976)" by Kendell Geers R10,000
Size 420mm x 300mm x 59mm less 20% museum discount
R 8,000

Mrs Woodward suggested that the register should be copied and a copy should be given to the State Archives. Mrs Woodward also suggested that if the register is to be displayed, the pages should be turned regularly to prevent fading. Mr Bloom suggested that the register should be closed when on display but with a photograph of a relevant page. The Committee suggested that the copyright should be bought along with the register.

IT WAS AGREED that the Inquest Register be purchased for R8,000 from Everard

Appendix 3: Loan Application Letter from Okwui Enwezor to Diana Wall

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H A U S D E R KUNST

Diana Wall
Manager:Collections
Museum Africa
121 Bree Street, Newtown
Johannesburg

P O Box 517
Newtown 2113

Okwui Enwezor
Director
T +49 89 21127 123
F +49 89 21127 157

November 29th, 2012

Kendell Geers

Dear Diana Wall,

The Haus der Kunst in close cooperation with curator Clive Kellner, is currently preparing an exhibition of selected works of the visual artist Kendell Geers from South Africa.

For the first time in Europe a survey of Geers early political works produced in South Africa and a selection of major installations produced in Europe since 2000 will be presented. Seminal early works will include Untitled (ANC, AVF, AWB, CR, DR, IFP, NP, PAC, SACP) 1993-1994 in which the artist joined each and every political party during the run-up to South Africa's first democratic election thereby exposing the borders of the democratic process bringing into question the fetishization culture of party politics and individuality.

In later works Geers shifts his concerns formally and aesthetically exploring new mediums and subjects in Europe. His artistic career shifts from the local in South Africa into the larger postcolonial paradigm as South Africa emerges from apartheid and cultural isolation. Living and producing works in Europe has cemented Geers inclusion into a global art system of exhibitions, travel and exposure. Here installations such as Terrorealismus 2003 and Postpunkpaganpop 2008 suggest a shift to more poetic concerns in the artist's production.

The exhibition will trace some of the literary influences that have informed Kendell Geers production including The House of Spirits 1982 (Isabel Allende), My Traitor's Heart 1989 (Riaan Malan), Heart of Darkness 1902 (Joseph Conrad), Waiting for the

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H A U S D E R K U N S T

Barbarians 1980 (J.M. Coetzee) and Country of My Skull 1998 (Antjie Krog). In this way the exhibition will also trace the 'archival impulse' of Kendell Geers artistic process.

We hope that we can also call upon the generous support of all lenders. Since this unique exhibition is based on a very concise selection of works, we would like to ask you for the loans of

Untitled (Death Register)

from your collection.

The exhibition is scheduled to take place in Munich from February 1st until May 12th 2013.

We strongly believe that this exhibition will contribute to a better understanding of all different aspects of Geer´s oeuvre and ideas, appealing both to specialists in the field as well as a broader public.
We want to thank you in advance for enabling us to realize this ambitious exhibition.

Your loan will, of course, be given the best care throughout the whole loan period, including conservational care during the installation, the exhibition perdiod and the deinstallation. We will provide 'nail to nail' insurance through our insurance brooker Kuhn & Bülow, Berlin and take care of appropriate packing and transport together with shipping agent Hasenkamp, leader in Germany. We shall naturally defray all costs incurring in the loan process: insurance, transport, courier.

In case of further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thanks very much in advance.
With all best wishes,

Okwui Enwezor
Director

Enc.

END