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Anne Y. Goodner 16 July 2011

Seeing the Other Side of White in David Goldblatt's *Some Afrikaners Photographed*

By

Anne Y. Goodner
Master of Arts
Art History Department, Emory University

_____
Sidney L. Kasfir, PhD
Advisor

_____
Pamela Scully, PhD
Committee Member

Accepted:

_____
Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

16 July 2011

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By
Anne Y. Goodner
BA, Smith College, 2007

Advisor:
Sidney L. Kasfir, PhD

An abstract of a thesis submitted to the Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Art History
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Abstract

Seeing the Other Side of White in David Goldblatt's *Some Afrikaners Photographed*
By Anne Y. Goodner

David Goldblatt's *Some Afrikaners Photographed* presents a counter-history to the dominant narrative of Afrikaner nationalism. First published in 1975, this book of eighty black and white photographs each with an accompanying text seeks to establish a more complicated and less monolithic history than that espoused by the Afrikaner National Party. In his photographs of mostly rural poor Afrikaners, Goldblatt reflects on his subject's marginalized status while simultaneously exploring his own position within the social and racial structures of Apartheid South Africa. This paper will examine the multiple narratives surrounding heritage, history and nationalism as seen through Goldblatt's lens. Goldblatt's images weave together a complex story about national belonging and how this concept is understood both by the disempowered and those with great power. Ultimately, *Some Afrikaners Photographed* illustrates the nuances and grey spots apparent in a time of mythic re-structuring in South Africa.

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Litany

By Richie Hofmann

after David Goldblatt's Some Afrikaners Photographed

Always the soft silver of black-&-white;
the pupils; the camera's flash; a bride's hands
wrung nervously, rough,
in the light at least,
from work; the tilted tiara. The bouquet of lilies
& white-flowers behind her, which, here,
means *happiness*; the cord of lace across
her collarbone, which, here, means *honor*
the ancestors.
Her bridegroom waiting outside,
telling someone 'Ek wil opgaan,' I wish to rise,

in a language the photographer calls *harsh*
like the people who spoke it.
Like the land also.
Always the southern window; the garden planted
in memory of those who came before us.
Always the stones: the wall around the farmyard
built by slaves two centuries ago;
the stones nearby,
which mark the graves of the ancestors: broken,
though even now you can make out the names.
Always the fields, & the orchard, where we grew

& dried fruit; the ostrich, flightless, who walks
among thorn trees.
Always the weddings; the years
of drought; the gash in the land where we took of earth:
shale, mudstone, uranium, gold.
& the land also;
dry wind moving as plovers through dry grass

Seeing the Other Side of White in David Goldblatt's *Some Afrikaners Photographed*

> *For it is not the story that counts. What matters is the way you tell it. The important thing is to know at what moment you must knock your pipe on your veldskoen, and at what stage in the story you must start talking about the school committee at Drogevlei. Another necessary thing is to know what part of the story to leave out.*
>
> *Herman Bosman, Mafeking Road.*[1]

> *I had that picture [and] thought very consciously that this is the place to make a declaration. It acts as a paradigm for the whole enterprise. The process of making a photographic image, which purports to be the real thing and isn't anything like, has transformed our self-perception, our perception of each other, our notion of what is beautiful, our notion of what will last and what won't.*
>
> *W.G. Sebald*[2]

I. Introduction: Visualizing an Afrikaner Counter-History

David Goldblatt's *Some Afrikaners Photographed* presents a counter-history to the dominant narrative of Afrikaner nationalism, which sought to codify Afrikaners as a singular and superior race.[3] First published in 1975, this work of eighty black and white photographs depicts mostly rural Afrikaners against a backdrop of tradition and local history. Goldblatt began photographing his subjects in the 1960's during the height of the Apartheid segregationist policies instituted by the Afrikaner-led National Party. His dominant subjects, however, tenant farmers, miners, shopkeepers, and lowly bureaucrats seem to exist far from the mass migration to the cities and the subsequent urban-based

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[1] Herman Charles Bosman, *Mafeking Road* (Cape Town; Johannesburg: Human and Rousseau, 1991), 42.
[2] Mark M. Anderson, "The Edge of Darkness: On W.G. Sebald," *October* 106 (Autumn, 2003), 110.
[3] Throughout this paper I relied on a reissue of *Some Afrikaners Photographed*, published in 2007 and renamed *Some Afrikaners Revisited.* Though Goldblatt added twenty more images to the work and an epigraph, the material and the intent remain the same. As all images were made concurrently in the 1960's, all photographs mentioned are printed in the most recent edition. Where necessary I have noted changes that occur only reissue, where Goldblatt altered several captions were to allow for a greater contextual backdrop.

economic restructurings of the National Party government.[4] In an effort to concretize and legitimize the superiority of the white, Afrikaner "race," the Apartheid government set about monumentalizing and mythologizing key events in Afrikaner history. Powerful cultural organizations were established with the rise of the National Party to ensure that a narrative of Afrikaner national belonging was set in place and to separate Afrikaners from black South Africans. This history worked to legitimize Afrikaners as a distinct group and tightly bound to the land as early as the seventeenth century. The place of poor white Afrikaners complicated this narrative of Afrikanerdom. On the one hand, the rural poor represented a threat to the purity of a white *volksgeist*. During the years leading up to the election of the National Party, their close living and working relationship with black South Africans threw their Afrikanerness into question. On the other, paradoxically, these poor whites simultaneously also bore the weight of Afrikaner national belonging because of their historical lineage.

Afrikaner farmers were often seen as the closest descendants of the pioneering Voortrekkers when photographic images first began to appear in national publications in the 1920's. Thus while Goldblatt states that he wanted to investigate the people who populated his daily existence, writing in the introduction to the first edition, "I came gradually to feel a need to know more closely something of the life and values of people whose influence so pervaded the place of my birth and who, I realized, had long been a powerful presence in my own life," *Some Afrikaners* also sets out to visualize the contradictory nature of Afrikaner nationalism.[5] The contradictions that abound in these

[4] By 1960, 76 percent of Afrikaners lives in towns. Rural poverty was one catalyst that pushed Afrikaners towards towns as well as the development of mining. David Welsh, "Urbanisation and the Solidarity of Afrikaner Nationalism," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 7 (1969), 265.
[5] David Goldblatt, Some Afrikaners Revisited (Cape Town: Umuzi, 2007), 9.

images vis-à-vis lowly Afrikaner class illustrates what the historian of South Africa Charles Van Onselen describes as "… no necessary congruence between ideology and social reality, between what leaders said, and the people did."[6] This echoes throughout the work in portraits of race, class and social relationships.

This paper will examine the multiple narratives surrounding heritage, history and belonging as seen through Goldblatt's lens. In so doing I hope to illustrate how the small-scale stories in Goldblatt's work carry their own historical weight in comparison with National Party mythologies. In order to illustrate the romanticized nature of these Nationalist presentations of pasts,[7] I will investigate the Nationalist view of the poor and the changing class structure of Afrikaners starting in the mid-twentieth century. In the late 1930's, an economic rift began to form between more elite and poor Afrikaners while the National Party simultaneously sought to codify its racial and historical identity. The poor, however, existed en masse during this time because of the Afrikaner roots in farming—in 1890 ninety percent of Afrikaners still lived on farms.[8] Nevertheless, the visual presence of the rural poor resulted in national anxiety surrounding race and class purification. As a result of this national anxiety I will also investigate the re-historicizing attempts by the growing National Party in the 1940's and 1950's, which situated the poor and rural as a fragment of the past, and outside of a current colonial legacy.

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[6] Charles Van Onselen, "Race and Class in the South African Countryside: Cultural Osmosis and Social Relations in the Sharecropping Economy of the South-Western Transvaal 1900-1950," *The American Historical Review* 95 (1990), 101.

[7] Leslie Witz, *Apartheid's Festival: Contesting South Africa's National Pasts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003). In this work, Witz writes about the 1952 Jan van Riebeeck festival, which sought to ceremonially connect the original settlement of Afrikaners to a larger Dutch colonial mission.

[8] Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: The Biography of a People* (London: Hurst and Company, 2003), xv.

Material objects such as early photographs, monuments, and symbols were central to the mythologizing of two hundred and fifty years of Afrikaner belonging, as Leslie Witz explains "a major element in the emergence of the National Party as a political force had been the invocation of a series of cultural symbols that established and constantly re-affirmed an Afrikaner identity as autochthonous, that is, as Africa and the land, and as white."[9] Thus Goldblatt's visualization of a group of Afrikaners both tightly bound to the land and seen on the "periphery of whiteness," is an important material work to consider in opposition to this nationalist re-historicizing process.[10]

The drafting of a mythic genesis narrative not only concretized white belonging in South Africa, but also pushed rural poor Afrikaans-speakers further to the periphery of an Afrikaner national history. The stories of dramatic warfare, and heroic pioneering and settlement were subsumed by the middle and elite class as a means to legitimize and authenticate their presence in the gathering force of nationalist politics. In his interpretation, Goldblatt bluntly illuminates the characteristics that place his subjects on the outside of mainstream Afrikaner society and probes the complex marginality of his Afrikaner subjects through his accompanying text. Goldblatt brings the seemingly anachronistic livelihood of his subjects into the present politics of South Africa in order to reveal contradictions apparent in the conception of Afrikaner national belonging.

Throughout this paper I will return to the central and most potent instance of historical complexity and contradiction—the photographs themselves. Goldblatt's

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[9] Witz,1.

[10] Marijke du Toit, "Blank Verbeeld, or the Incredible Whiteness of Being: Amateur Photography and Afrikaner Nationalist Historical Narrative." *Kronos* 27 (November 2001), 74. This concept will be considered more carefully later in the paper but "periphery of whiteness" is meant to engage with strict racial classification that read Afrikaners of a low class as in peril of mixing with black South Africans.

photographs portray multiple histories through a variety of forms. The image itself as a material form presents its own history as Elizabeth Edwards explains, "photographs are a major historical form for the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, yet we have hardly started to grasp what they are about, how to deal with their rawness, in both senses of the word—the unprocessed and perhaps the sometimes painful."[11] Pictorial rawness ties into an affective history of his subjects presented by his visual framing. This framing produces an emotional reaction regardless of the potential contradictions of his subjects. The presence and sometimes-uncomfortable absence of the human subject against the South African landscape allows Goldblatt to investigate the varied roots of Afrikaner belonging, while simultaneously exposing the polarities and hardships that accompany the concept of white heritage.

Finally, Goldblatt tells a story through his images, which is accomplished by a visualization of the works of the Afrikaner writer Herman Charles Bosman. Bosman's stories from the 1920's and 1930's drew on local settings and people, surrounded by adventure, community and personal intrigue. Goldblatt describes the impact of these stories on his view of rural Afrikaners and subsequently his photography:

> Besides giving me much delight, the stories collected in *Mafeking Road*…strongly influenced my photography. Unaffected in language, economic of means, deceptively simple in plot, they conveyed in near poetry, with humor, irony and profound understanding, what must surely have been the truth and particularity of Boer life in the Marico Bushveld in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Presumptuously, I aspired somehow to bring similar qualities to my photographs.[12]

[11] Elizabeth Edwards, "Photography and the Performance of History," *Kronos* 27 (November 2001),15.

[12] Goldblatt, 13.

Bosman's stories, as I will illustrate in the latter part of this paper, provide a further alternative narrative to contest the monolithic history of white belonging drafted by the National Party. While romantic and complimentary, these stories also create a sense of universal human connection tied together with the specific nuances of the local Marico Bushveld setting. The combination of Goldblatt's evocation of Bosman with the subjects of *Some Afrikaners* provides a visual answer to Edwards' prompt, "What is the affective tone with which [photographs] project that past into the present?"[13] Goldblatt's photographs are thus able to animate a certain authentic realm of Afrikaner personal history and belonging, while accounting for a rupturing of this realm through Goldblatt's subjectivity and encounters with his subjects.

II. An Introduction to the Photographs

Goldblatt's stark and beautiful images together with his straightforward text form a political fulcrum between this mythic settling of the land and the present condition of the Afrikaner underclass. For instance an image of a famer, clothes worn and face sun-beaten stands tall and looks directly at the camera **[Figure 1]**. The text simply reads "A farmer in Krisjan Geel's store at Zwingli in the Marico Bushveld." Looking more closely the viewer notices the neatly stacked supplies in the background, the relaxed stance of the farmer. A narrative of pride and hard work begins to develop; yet the absence of any markers of an outside world announces Goldblatt's curious "outsider" presence. Goldblatt's work is like an intricate musical score consisting of a dominant phrase that is interrupted ever so often by a new melodic variation, which then dives back into the undercurrent of music. Which piece of this project is the melody, the rural poor or the

[13] Edwards, 15.

ruptures that bring a more modern governmental power to play is often unclear. Even within the photographs themselves, there exist microcosms of the work as a whole. And yet Goldblatt denies more than tenuous links between images. Each photograph is a singular statement and yet it relies on the whole and on the image of South Africa changing and unchanged to find its form. In order to visualize this underclass as historically rooted and yet marginalized, Goldblatt reflects on his outsider subjectivity as a non-Afrikaner and descendant of Jewish immigrants. A potent question then remains in Goldblatt's work: how might these members, often loyal members, of a white supremacist ruling party, both fit in and defy the characteristics of Afrikaner identity?

The first image of the series is a washed out and seemingly desolate landscape **[Figure 2]**. Here Goldblatt introduces his main protagonists: the unremittingly harsh landscape, its subjects—both black and white—and a palpable sense of history and heritage. The accompanying text reads:

> The farm Quaggasfontein in the Great Karoo on a summer afternoon. About 200 years ago, after thirteen years of work, two slaves are said to have completed the building of this wall, which surrounds the farmyard.

The expansive sky appears a dusty grey and an ominous shadow crawls across the sun scorched, rocky ground. In the distance an unimposing bluff draws the eye to the vacant expanse of the terrain in the distance. In the middle foreground stands a low wall crudely yet meticulously piled with large slabs of rock. The only evidence of human engagement with this landscape beyond the fence itself is the windmill, which stands in the distance on the opposing side of the wall, and signals the viewer to consider where Goldblatt stands in relation to the boundaries of this farm. As the wall seems to fold into the barren landscape, the most compelling connection to humanity remains in Goldblatt's caption; it

yields an unassailable and yet tentative evocation of the past, one that arouses a sense of struggle and pride.

Looking closer one understands the role of land as the foundation of heritage and national belonging. Here the land is undeniably the central protagonist. However, with Goldblatt's narrative we understand also its history and inhospitality. Despite the social changes, slaves in the past, farmers in the present, the landscape itself does not portray the changes in this social history. One could argue that there is little change in these small agrarian pockets; that the land is the most timeless and dominant presence. Yet it is Goldblatt's presence as photographer, which portrays a sense of instability and change. From the shadows of his position the viewer's eye is drawn to the more modern windmill and the road. This photograph accurately displays the overlay of multiple histories that Goldblatt illustrates throughout his work.

The landscape and other contextual backdrops in his images, though they may not immediately register change, are not timeless. The modern world comes in small fissures: through house decorations, the sense of exodus and change written on subjects' faces, and the presence of Goldblatt's camera. Thus these moments of change deny the teleological and monolithic history of Afrikaner belonging created by the National Party. The few images of upwardly mobile, urban Afrikaners and stuffy party officials seem diametrically opposed to the rural subjects and their closeness to the land. Nonetheless the two realms are not mutually exclusive, and Goldblatt attempts to visualize these contradictions of space and time while remaining unprejudiced and even faithful to his subjects. It is this reflection of his curiosity and feelings of camaraderie, I believe, that allow Goldblatt to depict a counter-history on the terms of the working-class and all that

is held within its orbit.

While history is readily apparent in nearly every image, Goldblatt's subjects do not exist in a provincial vacuum. The stresses and pressures of the outside world are writ large in the daily hardship and isolation that exists within a modernizing South Africa. A photograph added in the reissued version in 2007 shows Piet Swanepoel engaged in never-ending work and illustrates the near pointless role of small tenant farming in the difficult South African bush **[Figure 3]**. A sheep standing dumbly atop a pile of dirt underscores the need for modernization and the lack of sustainable work in the area. The accompanying text, "Piet Swanepoel clears ground for planting on his farm in Gamkaskloof. He left the valley in 1992, the last of the Kloof farmers to do so," speaks of a strong sense of belonging, but also the acknowledgement that the rural Afrikaner livelihood, even in 1966, was no longer tenable. Despite the parallel status of his subjects, white but marginalized, Goldblatt most acutely allows the contradictions of his subjects to seep through in the relationship between the observer and the observed, as he explains, "I was strangely affected by some of them, for they seemed to be imbued with a great concentration with potent and often contradictory qualities that both moved and disturbed me."[14] His work thus serves as a way for Goldblatt to come to terms with what it means to have both a privileged and peripheral view of white South Africa.

III. David Goldblatt: Making History

Many scholars have written on Goldblatt's commitment to documenting the complexity of the South African landscape, its inhabitants and its structures. One of the early South African photographers to cross the racial and class lines erected by the

[14] David Goldblatt, *Some Afrikaners Revisited*. (Cape Town: Umuzi, 2007) 13.

Apartheid government, Goldblatt was an influential predecessor to a later generation of South African photographers who documented the injustice of Apartheid such as the collective Afrapix founded by Omar Badsha in the 1980's and the black photographer Santu Mofokeng.[15] At the time that Goldblatt began photographing the subjects of *Some Afrikaners*, however, there was not yet an established group of photographers documenting the various landscapes of Apartheid or the rise complex establishment of Afrikaner nationalism and identity.

Lauri Firstenberg is among many to read Goldblatt's work as undeniably political and documentary, referring to him as "a progenitor of the reinvention of the documentary genre in the charged territory of apartheid."[16] Few, however, have paid sustained attention to *Some Afrikaners* beyond the "in-between structures spaces and people," which fits to this project but is meant as a more general overview of his work.[17]. *Some Afrikaners*, while establishing a theme that would persist throughout his career, (depicting people and places in a way that place dominants the subject), goes beyond simple documentary. I will argue throughout that this project treads between documentary and myth and in effect pushes the viewer to question how history, reality and fiction come to pass. While it was difficult to find publishers for his early work inside South Africa, Goldblatt's entire oeuvre exists within the borders of his homeland. Thus Goldblatt was in a sense a pioneer of critical photographic practice in South Africa.

Unlike later photographers engaged heavily in documenting Apartheid resistance, (known as Struggle photographers), Goldblatt's early work presents a tenuous calm; there

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[15] Lauri Firstenberg, "Representing the Body Archivally in South African Photography," *Art Journal* 61 (April 1, 2002), 57. Also see Patricia Hayes, "Power, Secrecy, Proximity: A short History of South Africa Photography," *Kronos* 33 (2007), 139-167.
[16] Ibid., 57.
[17] Ibid., 57.

are ideological and political tensions abounding yet they are not the central subject matter. Michael Godby describes the style of Struggle photography as "urgent and declamatory, dictating specific readings," Interestingly, *Some Afrikaners* fits closely to Godby's description of post-Apartheid photography, which:

> …seemed to express a changed relationship to time, both in the suggestion of a greater familiarity between photographer and subject and in the sense that is should take the viewer time to discover layers or nuances of meaning in the image. The demand that the viewer should work to make sense of an image and accept complexity and contradiction as part of its meaning refers the experience of looking at photographs to the conditions of contemplating works of art in a gallery. [18]

Goldblatt's work explicitly encounters these issues during Apartheid, yet he also acknowledges himself that he intervened in the specific photographs perhaps to make them more acutely focused on the individual landscapes of Apartheid. In the forward to the reissued edition of *Some Afrikaners*, Goldblatt writes "It seems that, although I had accepted the rather austere 'philosophy' of one picture to a double-page spread, I still needed to emphasize the 'point' of certain pictures by cropping to their 'essentials.'"[19] In an acknowledgement of the very different times in which the new edition was published, Goldblatt "uncrops" the photographs from the original book, as he writes, "I no longer feel the anger, fear and disgust that I had then felt at what was being done to South Africa."[20] This expression is quite different than the short introduction to the original book and perhaps an illustration of the struggle and at times helplessness that photographers faced in South Africa as Apartheid took hold.

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[18] Michael Godby "After Apartheid: 10 South African Documentary Photographers," *African Arts* 37 (Winter, 2004), 37.
[19] Goldblatt, 17.
[20] Ibid., 17.

As a young man growing up in the 1940's, Goldblatt saw in photography a means to escape the isolation of his familial setting in Randfontein forty kilometers east of Johannesburg. As Godby describes, he "was interested in the political, photographing a squatter camp at Newclare…Goldblatt, like other international documentary photographers of the time [developed] a somewhat rhetorical style, with strong tonal contrasts and emphatic perspectives and camera angles."[21] While Goldblatt yearned for a readership abroad, after few of his images were published, he seemed to come to terms with representing a micro-history that cemented his role as a local, as a South African. *Some Afrikaners Photographed* was his second extensive photo-essay. With the diverse portraiture in this collection, Goldblatt confronts the complexity of Afrikaner lineage and his fragile place within this history. Goldblatt's accompanying prose is also a central part of the overall visual and affective narrative. The narrative is all the more pervasive in that each photograph is given a full page, as is the accompanying text. In the original work images were diversely cropped, angled, and exposed create a particular mise-en-scène for each individual setting and story. Goldblatt at once illustrates that these Afrikaners are part of a nation, but also independent, even isolated. While his photographs are noted for expressing multiple layers of social and cultural complexity, often in a simple format, little has been written on the way in which such layering forms a political narrative concurrent with a nationalist narrative in *Some Afrikaners*.

Bosman is often mentioned in concert with Goldblatt's work, yet little has been written beyond Bosman as an inspirational figure. In his emulation of Bosman both in regards to tone and writing style, but also in representing a liminal space between fiction

[21] Michael Godby, "David Goldblatt: The Personal and the Political," in *Fifty-One Years: David Goldblatt*, ed. Okwui Enwezor (Barcelona: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2001), 409.

and realism, Goldblatt, I will argue, depicts the construction of abstract concepts like belonging and heritage.[22] Goldblatt is faithful to his rural subjects, as he notes in his new epigraph, as a way to understand those who so influenced his life in a small town and his ideas about belonging. However, Goldblatt's commitment to his rural subjects and his intent to discover himself through them comes at a fault. His landscapes and subjects, while under social and economic stress are often bathed in a certain romantic feeling, which foregrounds the pride of his subjects despite their situation, while simultaneously pushing the reality of their poverty, their political views and the nuances of the rural environment to the sidelines. One must read Goldblatt's captions quite carefully so as not to categorize all of the rural poor, or rural working class as one, singular Afrikaner community.

The intersection of nuance, reality and romanticism is a complicated one. Goldblatt is clear about his original photographic intent "I needed to grasp something of what a man is and is becoming in all the particularity of himself and his bricks and bit of earth and of the place and to contain all this in a photograph," yet his process remains hidden.[23] For instance, while he uses Afrikaans words it is unclear whether he performed his interviews in Afrikaans or had translation help. No scholars have delved into the important technicalities of his photographic process during a period in which Goldblatt presumably would not have been accepted closely into rural Afrikaner communities. At the same time, while Godby speaks of his experimental photographic practice, it is also unclear in *Some Afrikaners* at what point such practices were put into play. At times it is

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[22] Okwui Enwezor, "Matter of Consciousness: An Insistent Gaze from a Not Disinterested Photographer*," Fifty-One Years: David Goldblatt* (Barcelona: Museum of Conteporary Art, 2001), 16.
[23] Goldblatt, 9.

quite clear where Goldblatt is standing, for instance a small room simply ends, while in others it seems improbable that Goldblatt might be so close to his subjects, or is it not? It is from this moment of non-clarity that I would like to argue, ancillary to Goldblatt's own words and even expressed intent another more complicated level to reality of *Some Afrikaners* comes to the surface. *Some Afrikaners* reveals simultaneously how solid and how malleable history and belonging can be. The romanticized, at times mythic stories his rural subjects tell him against the backdrop of an isolated (nearly uninhabited) South African bush might represent the shadow side of the own mythic stories and histories erected by the National Party.

Goldblatt initial intent in the 1960's was not to dominate and control his poorer subjects. Rather he reveals the stifling gap between the erstwhile center of Afrikaner tradition (the farmer) and the now very separate ruling class located in urban areas and at the universities. Goldblatt's images do not portray what Martha Rosler calls a "slumming spectacle," in part because Goldblatt's peripheral white status removes the photographs from the realm of an exclusively foreign gaze**.**[24] Unlike famous documentary photographers of the poor such as August Sander, Dorothea Lang and Jacob Riis, Goldblatt's photographs project his own presence and insecurities. While several photographs are shot from a distance or from behind, there is nevertheless a sense that his rural subjects are aware of their encounter with camera, and at the very least their subjectivities come out in the accompanying text. Goldblatt's subjectivity also eschews the idea of an ultimate truth in the image, and follows to a degree what John Tagg writes in the *Burden of Representation*, that "Every photograph is the result of specific and, in

[24] Martha Rosler, *Decoys and Disruptions Selected Writings, 1975-2001* (Cambridge, MA: October Books, 2004), 175.

every sense, significant distortions which render its relation to any prior reality deeply problematic and raise the question of the determining level of the material apparatus and of the social practices within which photography takes place."[25] *Some Afrikaners* is not intended as a general statement about the entire Afrikaner establishment.[26]

IV. Finding the Frame: The Trouble with Typologies

While Goldblatt is one of few South African photographers to photograph the beginning of the Apartheid era, one other photographer, Ernest Cole, stands out in relation to Goldblatt. Cole discovered a bureaucratic loophole in which to change his racial identity from black to colored, and thus was able photograph subjects and places, which would otherwise have been forbidden for him. Coles book, *House of Bondage* (1967), functioned as a subverted surveillance device capturing the underpinnings of Apartheid policy and methods of categorizing people and spaces **[Figure 4]**. Lauri Firstenberg notes, "presenting his work in the guise of documentary visual policing, Cole was able to leave South Africa with his negatives and go to the United Sates, where

[25] John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photography and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 2.

[26] Rosler writes that documentary photography "has come to represent the social conscience of liberal sensibility presented in visual imagery. Documentary with its original muckraking associations preceded the myth of journalistic objectivity and was partly strangled by it." Rosler, 176. *Some Afrikaners* with its merging of reality, fiction, and the self at no point represents this kind of objectivity. This is certainly another element that separates Goldblatt from early twentieth century documentary photographers, but also reveals the quite specific historiography of white South Africa, one in which the poor were very rarely seen as a subject for liberal politics. The very "concreteness" of these latter photographer's work, which signaled its social relevance is exactly what made Goldblatt's and earlier photographs so anxiety producing. While his later photographs of empty structures, vacant of human subjects follows more in what Lauri Firstenberg calls a "reinvention of the documentary genre in the charged territory of apartheid…an Atgetian effort at capturing silences or obscure illustrations," the interplay, however subtle, with Afrikaners situates *Some Afrikaners* somewhere between history, myth and authobiography Firstenberg, 59.

House of Bondage was published."[27] Goldblatt presents a subtler subversion of the documentary realm to capture the architecture of Apartheid from inside that architecture. However, Goldblatt's position is never as clearly marked outsider, or trespasser as Cole's and thus Goldblatt's subjectivity is much more evident. *Some Afrikaners* engages directly with its subjects whereas Cole's work is so powerful because of his distance. Nevertheless *Some Afrikaners* work shatters certain typologies of race and class with its ambiguity; something Cole was able to do both personally and in his photography.

When one considers the colonial-style images from the early twentieth century that formed a precursor to later the racial categorizations of the 1950's, it is notable how Goldblatt's images eschew these types of typologies. In writing on early twentieth century images of Afrikaners, Marijke du Toit notes the ways in which framing allowed for their poorness to be mediated by the camera and setting **[Figure 5].** Commenting on a portrait of her own great-grandparents from the 1930's, photographed against a seemingly empty landscape du Toit writes:

> Where is whiteness in this picture? Perhaps it is located in that part of the image I first found so strange: why did my forebears choose this empty space as background for their portrait? I understood more when my mother…reminded me that they had received a smallholding as part of the Dutch Reformed Church's rehabilitation scheme for landless whites. This was their farm at Marchand in the northern Cape—my great grandparents pose, proudly, in front of cultivated land. Hardly empty, this space was indeed *blank* (white).[28]

I will write more extensively about such photographs in the latter half of this work, however it is important to note the presence of such typologies and how important classifications and meaning can be buried in an image. Furthermore, there is a degree of

[27] Ibid., 59.
[28] du Toit, 78.

surveillance in these early images, something that would be echoed some decades later by the National Party's apartheid policies. This follows in what Allan Sekula has written in regards to the early role of photography in Europe and the U.S. as a device for categorizing and ultimately controlling subjects. Sekula notes that in an effort to separate out the degenerate from the law-abiding, it was police, doctors and jailers who took up the role of photographer. Such images produced undisputed reality, written physiologically on the faces and bodies of the photographic subject and archived to create a legitimate corpus of study and reasoning.[29]

Early photographs like du Toit's illustrate the groundwork for categorizing South African subjects, which would ultimately lead to later state control and surveillance. The mandatory passbook, which blacks and coloreds were required to carried, is substantial evidence of this. *Some Afrikaners* is intriguing to consider within this context, for while Goldblatt accepts that the land is a site of history, pride and control, he also allows for the meanings both manipulated and not to shine through his subjects. Goldblatt demonstrates that the contextual background of these images, such as an empty landscape, is a site of multiple layers of narratives regarding iconography. The blurriness between fiction and reality lends itself to open-endedness in his work. While Goldblatt says his prose was simply inspired by his openness and his depictions of a people Goldblatt himself identified with, the interplay in Bosman's work between fiction and non-fiction carries over into *Some Afrikaners* and thus acts, through text and image, as a way to show how such stories are formed in the first place. I see these images, as an alternatively hazy reality to that espoused by the National Party beginning in the 1930's. Thus it is important to understand how and why such narratives were constructed.

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[29] Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* 39 (Winter, 1986), 18.

V. Performing the Past: The Construction of an Afrikaner National Heritage

Scholars have generally understood the rise of Afrikaner nationalism as a result of changing class status among the former rural majority of Afrikaners, and the consolidation of Afrikaner history in an effort to soften potential class ruptures among Afrikaners.[30] As Afrikaner nationalism grew stronger leading up to the election of the National Party in 1948, elite Afrikaners worked to historically legitimize their colonial legacy. Ivor Powell and Leslie Witz note the romantic narrative established by Afrikaner Nationalists at the time of the 1938 centenary of the northward migration known as the Great Trek and the 1952 tercentenary of Jan van Riebeeck's landing and founding of the "first white settlement" at the Cape of Good Hope.[31] Afrikaner Nationalist ideology was built on real life economic change and industrialization, yet much of the rhetoric was erected from myth and prejudice about non-Afrikaners. For instance, as David Welsh points out, a long held Afrikaner belief that Johannesburg was the seedbed of English and Jewish corruption still persisted after mass migration to the cities, as he describes:

> By the late 1930s, when the South African economy had recovered from the depression and was expanding rapidly, and when the poor white problem had been largely overcome, leading Afrikaner nationalists realised that, for a large proportion of their countrymen, urbanisation was permanent. They resolved at the Ekono miese Volkskongres (Afrikaner People's Economic Congress), in Bloem-fontein in I939, to 'conquer the cities' by organising for the economic recovery of Afrikaners and breaking the hold which English and Jewish capitalists had over the industrial and commercial life of the country.[32]

While early Afrikaners moved from subsistence farming in the early to mid twentieth

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[30] Melvin Goldberg, 'The Nature of Afrikaner Nationalism," The Journal of Modern African Studies 23 (Mar., 1985), 197.
[31] Powell, 25.
[32] David Welsh, "Urbanisation and the Solidarity of Afrikaner Nationalism," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 7 (1969), 266.

century, the poor, without the skills to find other work, represented an obstacle to the notion of progress in the 1920's and 1930's. Despite mass migration to cities and Afrikaner-led educational and training programs, poor Afrikaners in both countryside and the city struggled to find their place amidst a flood of English-speaking immigrants and an African proletariat.[33] While much has been written on the migration to towns and the subsequent crisis over maintaining distinct Afrikaner traits, which were seen as old-fashioned and not economically viable, Goldblatt's images show the antecedents of these migrants and how the outside, modern world nevertheless impacted these mire isolated Afrikaners. Those who remained on the land were excluded from the economic restructurings of the National Party, which included an emphasis on class solidarity.[34] Thus the National Party in an effort to consolidate urban-based Afrikaner power stressed a historical narrative that pushed the rural farther out of a nationalist frame. This also meant that those who remained in rural areas, perhaps committed to original tenants of Afrikaner identity, such as isolationism, indeed became more and more isolated from the outside world.

Leslie Witz describes the nationalist narrative as an attempt by party officials to preserve an aspect of Afrikaner identity that was in danger of being washed away by growing cosmopolitanism in towns and cities. Ironically this new urban-based Afrikaner population still depended on a connection to the land as Witz notes:

> As South African society, particularly after the coming to power of the National Party in 1948, was increasingly subject to regimes of racial hierarchies, political exclusion, and state repression, new forms and versions of South African history were created by the government, by cultural and political organizations, and by individual scholars. At times the historical narratives produced took a form that

[33] Ibid., 266.
[34] Ibid., 266.

> legitimated this 'thoroughgoing system of racial engineering' often depicting the land as empty of people prior to European settlement.[35]

Much of this new history depended on the foundation of Afrikaner identity following the Great Trek. Prior to the 1830's Afrikaners remained in the Cape Province and worked as burghers, employing large amounts of slave labor, yet also refusing to align themselves with British Nationalism present at the time. The distinct language and religion fostered by the Calvinist Dutch Reform Church further separated Afrikaners into an ethnic group.

According to historian Andre du Toit, since the 1930's scholars have relied on the centrality of Afrikaner Calvanist convictions "in a specific variant of the more comprehensive 'frontier' interpretation of South African history…Afrikaner nationalism is less a product of its unique cultural roots than the result of ideological labors of a modernizing elite seeking to ensure social cohesion in transitional times."[36] Thus while thoughts of superiority in the eyes of God were echoed by the National Party in the colonial narrative, it heavily borrowed from earlier ideologies attached to early migrants, that "Voortrekkers and the Republican Afrikaners conceived of themselves as a chosen and covenanted people, like the Israelites of the Old testament, and early Afrikaners presumed a divine mandate to smite heathen people and reduce them to their pre-ordained position as perpetual hewers of wood and drawers of water."[37] This ideology would later serve as the foundation of Henrik Verwoerd's apartheid policies.

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[35] Witz, 5.
[36] Andre du Toit, "No chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism and Racial Ideology," *The American Historical Review* 88 (Oct., 1983), 920, 952. In this essay, however, Du Toit notes that the Calvinist myth of Afrikaner nationalism is also a myth that needs to be questioned, for in fact the Calvinist settlers were themselves marginalized and isolated.
[37] Ibid., 920.

With the British outlawing of slavery, however, Afrikaners began "a peaceful revolt, against British abolition of almost all they had known as farmers," which nevertheless also represented their dependence on slave labor.[38] Through the Great Trek Afrikaner self-sufficiency and an Afrikaner colonial narrative found great heft. Ironically, though, as Hermann Giliomee points out, "The trek destroyed the ability for any unifying of the Afrikaners," and thus the crucible of Afrikaner belonging across South Africa was predicated, as noted earlier, on fiction.[39] The Great Trek commenced nearly one hundred years of agrarian life in the interior of South Africa, war with the British, and the establishment of an Afrikaner rural identity, though diverse and splintered.

In the 1930's, the growing Nationalist government founded The Federation of Afrikaans Culture Organisations, South Africa, or FAK, in order to unify Afrikaners under a rubric of national heritage. This "volk" movement, was closely aligned with the political and economic concerns of the burgeoning National Party led by D.F. Malan, whose ultimate goal was the reification of Afrikaners into a single race and class. Locating poor whites within this matrix was imperative since in the 1930's one quarter of all Afrikaners were poor and rural. Unwilling to take responsibility for an economic system, which left poor Afrikaners with little skill, the FAK sought to benefit from their "volk" status and rallied the urban poor:

> The blood of the poor is noble and if they also grab hold of the hand of the FAK, their struggle for self-preservation will be made easier. On them depends the future of our volk. Therefore the FAK will strive and battle against any anti-national attempt to divide our volk into classes.[40]

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[38] Giliomee, xiv.
[39] Ibid., xiv
[40] Patrick Furlong, *Between Crown and Swastika: The Impact of the Radical Right on the Afrikaner Nationalist Movement in the Fascist Era* (London: Wesleyan University Press), 110.

While class disparities were most apparent in the towns, National Party leaders such as Malan believed that this was the result of poverty and bad education in rural areas. The rural poor on the other hand were too large and too dispersed to mobilize in the same way as the downtrodden Afrikaner urban worker. At the same time, the professor J.F.W. Grosskopf advised more upwardly mobile Dutch-speaking Afrikaners who were "beginning to feel ashamed of this group of their people [i.e. impoverished urban Afrikaners of rural origins and to treat them with some contempt and a little sympathy."[41] Though rural Afrikaners, leading up to Afrikaner nationalist politics, were understood as sacred and the closest descendants of the Boer migration, the celebrations surrounding the centenary of the Great Trek also commodified their image in a way that made real poverty invisible. Ossewatrek, or Ox Wagon Trek, which accompanied the ceremonial events of the Great Trek centenary, involved a performance of history where thousands of Afrikaners dressed in pioneer garb and paraded with covered wagons. In a sense the more mobile Afrikaners transported themselves to a time when an economic system that created class stratification was seemingly absent.

In images where Goldblatt situates himself outside of the actions unfolding within the frame, he captures the masquerading of the middle class as they established moments of historical importance. A photograph of "volkspelers" celebrating the Boer victory over the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River, contrasts with the awkwardness of period dress against a clearing filled with modern automobiles **[Figure 6]**. Nevertheless, images of Afrikaners doing hard labor still in the 1960's, such a Goldblatt's photograph of "Mrs. L.C. Rall, widow and farmer, in her cattle kraal," presented visual anxiety in comparison with the mythic histories and monuments of the Great Trek **[Figure 7]**. The

[41] Welsh, 268.

scattered and small-scale livelihood of rural subjects revealed another myth about the Great Trek, what Powell describes as, "a largely unstructured migration of the malcontent and the marginalized."[42]

In the few pictures of party officials and upwardly mobile Afrikaners, the landscape and habitus seen so clearly in other images is notably absent. The portrait of senior members of the National Party at fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the party is a frightening depiction of power and indifference **[Figure 8]**. Their faces are twisted into a caricature of governmental corruption and power. Perhaps they are simply bored, or hot under the Transvaal sun. Yet with Goldblatt's tight cropping and washed out grey background the viewer is shut out. So too is the viewer placed on the outside in a friendlier portrait of a middle class get together in Johannesburg **[Figure 9]**. The female subjects stare blithely at the glare of a television screen. The caption reads, "Once a year, on the birthday of the grandmother of these girls, this family came together from many parts of South Africa." The anonymity is a far cry from the intimate portraits and the historical lineages that Goldblatt plumbs in his rural portraits but that are also quite visible upon first viewing.

While these upwardly mobile Afrikaners are Europeanized in their appearance and power, a more complicated history reveals the contradictions in this identity. Nationalists represented themselves both as a colonized people, casting the British in a role of European brutality, and also, as legitimate non-colonial settlers of the land, represented by the "volk" movement. In order to accomplish this task "a moment [was] selected, in 1952, by the South African government and a range of cultural organizations, to signify original nationhood: the establishment of a revictualing station at Table Bay in

[42] Powell, 22.

April 1652."[43] This moment, the landing of Jan van Riebeeck, a sailor with the Dutch East India Company allowed for a European historical pedigree, or "an icon of whiteness" to rival the British, while the subsequent history of the Boers as pioneers and a race unto themselves secured a non-European identity.[44] Whiteness was, nevertheless, central to Afrikaner belonging, and speaks strongly of the fear that class and race might intersect. This potential intersection, whether by means of economic and labor imperatives, or the frequency of miscegenation in the nineteenth century is an illustration of both a mutual dependence between black and white and an already established historical precedent. To add to this the photographs in *Some Afrikaners* dealt in many cases with the economically imperative relationship between black sharecroppers and white bywoners (or white tenant farmers). The lack of modernization in these areas also showed a world cut off from Afrikaner rule and in danger of mixing.

The mythologized history was an attempt to allay fears about the leveling of the classes. Therefore, the presence and especially the visible presence of the poor caused great consternation. The Carnegie Commission Investigation of the Poor White Problem in South Africa, (1929/1932), posed further complications to this widening class rift by executing the first formalized inquiry by Afrikaners of Afrikaners. Commissioners made distinctions between those members of white civilization in "decline" and those who were upwardly mobile. This quasi-scientific approach helped bolster the rise of an elite Afrikaner class, despite the commission's efforts to establish a South African welfare system.[45] The investigation gathered information on economic status and the causes of

[43] Witz, 3.
[44] Ibid., 3.
[45]Morag, Bell, "American Philanthropy, The Carnegie Corporation and Poverty in South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26 (September 2000), 489.

poverty, but it also began a codification of race, something that would be continued in the 1951 census and the Population Registration Act. As Deborah Posel points out, race became separate from history and subject to social construction, or Afrikaner *common sense*; "in other words census takers became racial classifiers."[46] The re-historicizing efforts of the National Party responded most acutely to a fear in class shifts and the introduction to a capitalist system. Yet the rural areas, especially those in Goldblatt's photographs, presented an alternative reality to the strict hierarchy and supremacy status of Afrikaners.

VI. Outside the Margins of Present Histories

Some Afrikaners Photographed was received in South Africa with outrage. After several images in the series were published in the Swiss photo magazine, *Camera* in 1969, a review in *Dagbreek en Sondagnuus* screamed "Bloed sal kook!" (Blood will Boil!)[47] The few photographs available were seen as an ethnic slur on Afrikanerdom. While other Afrikaner critics were slightly less volatile, few seemed to grasp how they might see and understand this work, or that there was a conceptual narrative that accompanied the photographs, which was not present in *Camera*. *Some Afrikaners* was perhaps considered so threatening because it dared to show another side of Afrikaner history that was, by 1969, still relatively new. This reaction revealed the delicacy of this history. For instance, a photograph of a woman and her daughter at the hallowed Voortrekker Monument was assumed by the above critic to be staged, as the child roots

[46] Deborah Posel "Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth-Century South Africa," *African Studies Review* 44 (September 2001), 104.
[47] Ivor Powell, "The Anxiety of Identity and Some Afrikaners," in *Some Afrikaners Revisited*, David Goldblatt (Cape Town: Umuzi, 2007), 18.

around in makeshift Zulu huts in the foreground **[Figure 10]**. The critic ignores the fact that the huts were erected to commemorate the Boer defeat of the Zulus at the Battle of Blood River. Provoked by an image of seeming impropriety, history or the formulation of history disappears in the need to protect Afrikaner heritage.

While there is a close confrontation with history in this aforementioned image, the middle-class subjects are nevertheless turned away from Goldblatt, and thus the viewer is left to question, what or who is the subject of this photograph. This image may seem problematic for its inherent Walker Evans-esque intrusiveness, combined with a strong political tone, yet Goldblatt's images are perhaps so compelling because his narrative allows for intimacy and distance simultaneously. Goldblatt illustrates the complexities of character through this warmth and distance, characteristics that would have been considered un-Afrikaner by the aforementioned anonymous reviewer. Goldblatt attempts to penetrate not just his subject's daily lives but also their worldview, and at the same time visually depicts the difficulty of doing so.

One instance of this intimacy is the photograph of Frik Loubser, "farmer, shopkeeper and post-master in the Marico Bushveld, near Nietverdiend, Transvaal." **[Figure 11]**. The image shows a stout man, looking openly towards the camera. He smiles in a relaxed manner. His shirt is unbuttoned slightly, and worn ragged at the sleeves. His hat frames his warm, almost childlike face. Goldblatt's description reads,

> …sitting before the *bakoond* in which his wife baked bread. He spoke of Harold Wilson and Britains's finances; of his son, the fastest runner at Nietverdiend school; of the effect on his shop of the removal of the African families from that area under the government's racial laws; of the regrettable tendency to serve instant coffee on Marico *stoeps*; and of the bushveld which he loved.

Goldblatt's lens acts as a receptor for this man's narrative or the way that Goldblatt may have interpreted this narrative. The friendly demeanor between subject and observer speaks perhaps of this Afrikaner as an archetype of the warmth and openness; a portrait of Afrikaner belonging on Frik Loubser's own terms. At the same time small traces of the photographic process are evident in this image. Loubser, likely a liberal or "enlightened" Afrikaner based on his political views might be responding in kind to Goldblatt, which accounts for his openness and warmth. Still in other portraits, there seems the ever-present possibility of distance and even alienation. In another image Goldblatt frames his two subjects, a weathered middle-aged man and a young boy, through a farmhouse door leading to a sparse kitchen **[Figure 12]**. They are turned towards each other but away from the camera. There is a ritualistic quality to this image, which seems far removed from the modern world and thus all the more close to the early ideals of rural Afrikaner heritage and self-sufficiency. These two subjects sit in a relaxed position but they seem tired, and the bright sunlight shining through a small concrete window suggests work to be done. Goldblatt's updated texts explains,

> In 1967, when this photograph was taken, life in the Kloof still retained much of the quality of isolation of people's lives there over the years. Gradually, however, the farmers left and, by 1992, they had all gone. Their houses became derelict and their orchards and fields overgrown.

This is a heritage that is slipping away, that Goldblatt can sense but is outside of. The stories told by his first subject seem all but silent in this image and outside of the visitors' purview. The modern world imagined by the National Party is encroaching. As seen in the previous photograph of Piet Swanepoel, Goldblatt often produced diverse images of the same area. The viewer begins to understand the traces of a narrative about each region and the people who live there, yet it is far from complete.

This fragile equation between land and habitation, history and belonging, is ingrained in Goldblatt's most moving images. "Koot and Hettie Cordier and their children going to visit their next-door neighbours, the Snymans" is one such instance **[Figure 13]**. Here Goldblatt's distance and intimacy are merged. The dominating landscape catches the eye in the background, yet the family, some treading barefoot across the yard also draws the viewer's attention and signals a certain symbiosis between subject and context. Still with his recurring characters and settings, Goldblatt digs deeper to reveal the complexities that make this history and the present day realities and histories of change that fall outside of the segregationist policies of Apartheid. One first needs to understand the canonized history of Afrikaner belonging that was devised by the National Party, yet continuously challenged in the work of Goldblatt.

Closeness and distance is what allows Goldblatt to express the contradictions evident in the very character of his subjects, and why their personal histories are so complicated to understand because they are, in a way, linked to the history written by the National Party. An important question arises when one considers Goldblatt's position (that of a liberal, white, non-Afrikaner) in the construction of his project. The viewer, for instance, may not always be privy to moments of staging in the work; rather each portrait, though not explicitly documentary, exhibits a candidness that purports a certain truth about the subject matter, even with Goldblatt's experimental techniques. The role of Bosman's world creates another level of complexity, that of reality (the setting of the stories), overlaid by fiction (Bosman's creative license), overlaid by reality (Goldblatt's images of actual characters) and then finally another, perhaps subtler subjective

interpretation (the insertion of Goldblatt's narrative voice and ideology and the hidden process of his image making**).**

What the viewer is shown is shaped just as much by myth and self-identification, as by the forces of the National Party and the building of an Afrikaner nation. Goldblatt's staging and cropping results in a continuity of personage, but also presents a challenge to the viewer to look and discern which set of histories and ideals about an Afrikaner nation exist for each subject. This is where Goldblatt's subjectivity is the strongest. One might note that those subjects he finds connection with are photographed in a way, which allows myriad narratives to shine through. While class is an important element to consider both in the images themselves and the relationship between photographer and subject, it is important to consider how Goldblatt's middle-class idealism both hinders and illuminates the very tenuous underpinning of class construction. Understanding this complex intertwining of class relations allows for a greater understanding of why the writing of an exclusive, European style Afrikaner history so important to the dominant class.

Godby writes about Goldblatt's personal politics as a means to understand his subjects as opposed to exoticize them. A prime example of this is Goldblatt's use of "Some*"* in his title, which opens up the opportunity to critique the meticulous racial categories that splintered the Afrikaans-speaking population into separate racial groups during the Population Registration Act of 1950. In the introduction to the 1975 book Goldblatt writes,

> For a while I thought of photographing *the* Afrikaner People. It took time to understand that for me such a project would be grossly pretentious and probably impossible to achieve an acceptably 'balanced' picture of a people. I was concerned with the minutiae of Afrikaner life, with a few people. I needed to

> grasp something of what a man is and is becoming in all the particularity of himself and his bricks and bit of earth and of the place and to contain all this in a photograph. To do this and to discover the shapes and shade of his loves and fears and of my own would be enough.[48]

That *minutia* is exactly what differentiates Goldblatt's subjects from a monolithic gaze, allowing Afrikaner to expand beyond racial definitions. My own use of the word "Seeing" in the title thus underscores Goldblatt's intention to unveil the everyday life of those Afrikaners as opposed to relying on categorizations of a people. Within this project there is a more flexible allowance of what makes an Afrikaner, and for many of Goldblatt's rural subjects that includes the presence of black South Africans. These subjects are not just ancillary to image, but often support much of an images narrative and demonstrate the complexity of separating out a distinctly white Afrikaner history.

VII. *Gelykstelling*: Fear and Fact

As migration to the city and the introduction of a capitalist economy took hold in the 1930's and 1940's, Nationalists supported the foreseen need for an even stricter codification of race and the typologies of Afrikanerdom. Yet in rural areas the relationships between white tenant farmers and their black sharecroppers yielded an intricate world of alternative social interactions and rules in the face of economic changes. The rural thus presented a site in which *gelykstelling*, or social leveling, presented a great reality and great fear among Nationalists.[49] Goldblatt embraces complexity in regards to typologies of race and class in order to delve into the realities of rural livelihood.

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[48] Goldblatt, 9.
[49] Giliomee, xiv. Giliomee writes of gelykstelling as an initial and central tenant of the Afrikaner way of live in the nineteenth century. s

On farms that had not yet completely modernized with the help of the tractor, the work of black sharecroppers who began settling in the northern and western South Africa at the end of the nineteenth century were a very visible asset to white tenant farmers and wealthier landowners. [50]As such, a different code of conduct existed on rural farms than did in other parts of the Afrikaner or British run economy. The co-dependent quality of this close sharecropper-tenant farmer relationship, however, signaled to capitalist landowners and to the Nationalist government an anti-progressive system. Close attention was not paid to the fact that farming was until the 1940's the central means of employment and identity for a large percentage of the Afrikaner population. A close social network formed which, even though denying black sharecroppers the possibility of ever owning land, allowed a cultural and even spiritual exchange completely antithetical to the credos of Apartheid. Charles Van Onselen describes the change in social structure that accompanied backbreaking labor on both the part of sharecropper and tenant farmer in the western Transvaal,

> The behavior of significant numbers of blacks and whites on the platteland often transcended the stark and restrictive code of race relations as it is generally understood and reached a surprising measure of accommodation in a sadly divided society…The bywoners-by virtue of the work they performed and the underprivileged social and economic position they occupied in the rural order-were locked into a more permanent structural proximity to most of the blacks on the farms.

This means that Afrikaners, whose identity was reliant on farming was intricately linked to the existence of black farm workers. *Some Afrikaners* certainly visualizes aspects of this complicated social relationship. Dozens of photographs feature black sharecroppers and white farmers in various states of work and relationship. In a portrait of Johannes van der Linde "farmer and major in the local army reserve, with his head labourer 'Ou Sam'"

[50] Van Onselen

Goldblatt proves that he understands the nuances in language and daily interaction **[Figure 14]**. Van der Linde stands tall and barrel-chested, the muddy fields stretch out behind him. Ou Sam stands at ease, while another works casually smokes a cigarette in the background. Goldblatt continues, "In the manner of respectful indirect address in Afrikaans as between a parent and child, Van der Linde asked, does the Baas swear at you? To which the reply was, "No Baas, the Baas does not swear at me." The nature of this exchange seems steeped in racism nonetheless, but Van Onselen notes that there are hierarchies of names, both for whites and blacks, dictating a specific degree of respect and achievement for each. An inspection of Ou Sam's clothing and wide-brimmed leather hat reveals a similarity to the garb of other tenant farmers throughout this work. Thus Van der Linde's social status becomes something of an anomaly, unanchored to a narrative of class systems, seen amongst urban dwellers. If one looks again at the first photograph I mentioned, a farmer standing presumably in his work clothes, there seems again a connective fiber not between the two Afrikaner men, but between Ou Sam and the Afrikaner farmer in Zwingli. Goldblatt captures both men outside of the restrictive boundaries of Apartheid policies. Sam is having a casual, though admittedly contrived, conversation, yet looking behind to the other, black farm hand one begins to understand how the kinds of complicated hierarchies that van Onselen speaks of might function not just between whites and blacks but between blacks themselves. As for the farmer in Zwingli, his clothes are dirty, and though there is no present narrative to understand where he has come from and where he is going, one may look to other photographs in the series, which depict actual labor help to fill in the gaps.

The reigning poverty in these areas Van Onselen believes was a main cause of close

social dynamics between black and whites: "this difficult terrain was more easily negotiated where the scythe of poverty had cleared the way for humility and the prospect of genuine economic cooperation."[51] The economic cooperation captured by Goldblatt demystified the land as historically and exclusively white. It also laid bare the lack of economic responsibility of the ruling government to educate poor whites and their slow shift from an agrarian-based society. To make moments of *gelykstelling* visible, Goldblatt uncovers moments of cooperation, which speaks of Afrikaners, steeped in an Afrikaner farming tradition, yet leading an un-Afrikaner life in the close presence of black workers. The rural setting is not a land of mythology but of everyday life. Nevertheless, with the early introduction of the camera in the 1920's the growing numbers of middle-class Afrikaners attempted to contain and codify the poor through a distinct photographic frame.

VIII. Social Reality and the Fiction of Photography

As early as the 1920's amateur photographers produced images of the poor Afrikaners. On the surface these images suggest an attempt to unite a burgeoning nation, yet these images also underscore the already splintering class stratifications among Afrikaners. When held up to Goldblatt's photographs, these early photographs expose a far different role in mediation and surveillance of poor subjects. These images already announce the mythology and legacy of the Great Trek, positioning the poor in the eyes of its viewers as a tokenized connection to a past. The availability of the Kodak camera meant a certain categorizing of the subject while the observer's presence remains

[51] Van Onselen, 117. Van Onselen expands on these intricacies of class and race in his thorough investigation of the sharecropper Kas Maine in his book *Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, A South African Sharecropper, 1894-1985*.

invisible to the viewer. Examining the economic and social activities surrounding poor Afrikaners in the 1920's and 1930's reveals their inherent exclusion from nation building efforts.

Many of these amateur images appeared in editions of the popular Afrikaans lifestyle magazine *Die Huisgenoot*. First published in 1916, the magazine was an ideal forum for upwardly mobile Afrikaners to share and show-off their interactions with the landscape and its people. In this way, it is not surprising that the poor served both the function of showing an authentic, untouched South Africa, but also motivated the middle-class to engage in social work on behalf of less fortunate Afrikaners. This deed fulfilled the imperative of Afrikaners "to become well informed and proper citizens who could hold their own in all walks of life, including commerce. Its success in stimulating a consciousness of history certainly prepared the ground for the hugely successful 1938 centenary celebrations of the Great Trek."[52]

In preparation for the most flamboyant display of Afrikaner heritage, the Great Trek Centenary, images-producers for Die *Huisgenoot* and accompanying photo contests, attempted to represent an unbreakable bond to the past and thus legitimize Afrikaners as the original settlers of South Africa. Du Toit illustrates through images such as those by Erik Stockenstrom that attempts at re-situating the poor as closest to the original Voortrekkers, was a certain means of constraining them to the past and not the present. These images may have resonated with characteristics that distinguished Afrikaners from the British, namely a self-sufficient nature that typified their establishment of settlements in the South African interior.

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[52] Giliomee, 375.

One such photograph from 1921 shows a destitute woman, sheathed in black, accompanied by a caption which reads, "The old heroine did me the honour of allowing me to take her picture… immediately [you] notice from her portrait something striking, something noble about the face—a daughter of South Africa **[Figure 15]**."[53] There is nonetheless a staging and propagandistic quality to these images. At once these images are meant to situate the poor within the bounds of whiteness, while at the same time there is a relationship of mutual dependence between observer and observed as Du Toit explains,

> But all look straight into the lens of the camera—and towards an imagined audience of benefactors? Perhaps these were all, with different degrees of assent or submission, performative collaborations seeking to express both respectability and need within conventions that would 'speak to' Afrikaners of a passing era's paternalist relations between bywoner and boer.[54]

Upwardly mobile Afrikaners thus needed to find a historical legitimacy, and they found that in the poor, while at the same time needed to contain the presence of these people within the confines of a certain Afrikaner historiography.

Surprisingly, Goldblatt does not once reference these earlier images, or images produced by the Carnegie Commission. It is unknown whether he would have encountered these images especially under the Nationalist regime. However, the fact that *Some Afrikaners* stands without a link to an earlier tradition of photographing the poor, in a way is one of its strongest statements. While photographs in *Huisgenoot* erected a narrative barrier between viewer and subject, disallowing associations that might denote these people as simply poor, Goldblatt allows his subjects multiple contexts. There is a visibility that Goldblatt strives for here, which defies the kind of typologies early

[53] Du Toit, 98.
[54] Ibid., 101.

photographs constructed. Furthermore, *Some Afrikaners* remains localized in its context rather than harkening back to a mythic past. Goldblatt's stories are of everyday life, and seek to express how national belonging finds its roots in the soil and generations of agrarian life.

His image of farmer J.G Loots with his fluffy white ewe appears almost silly **[Figure 16]**. So closely cropped is the photograph that it is difficult not to compare the facial expression of doting animal and faithful owner. As in other portraits, the sky is a dusty grey, and here Loots calmly looks into the distance. There is a of the image of the past which collides with the present, certainly reinforced by Goldblatt's caption "J.G. Loots of the farm Quaggasfontein (from the first image) where his family had farmed for more than 200 years. There were several prize ewes. He called each in turn by name, and each came to be petted." There is little that is mythic or grandiose about this picture beyond the generation of family farmers in this isolated area of the Eastern Cape. This image also reflects Goldblatt's interest in visibility and documentary, through "spectacular camera angles, charged lighting effects, brutal cropping and radical compositional designs.*"*[55]

Experimental cropping and lighting also allows Goldblatt to confront the set of contradictions among his subjects **[Figure 17]**. There are multiple portraits and multiple narratives in the image, "Lewies Nel in his voorkamer. On the battery- powered turntable Jeremy Taylor was singing 'Ag oleeze Deddy won't you take us to the drive-in.'" Here Goldblatt's more experimental exposure and cropping style are on display with, most prominently with the central female figure exiting the front room into a blur of light. With an effort the viewer must draw their gaze away from the center of this picture and

[55] Godby, 412.

its light source to examine the rest of this room. The caption draws the attention to the record player, and stack of records speaks to the modern world seeping in. So too does the obligatory party portrait of Prime Minister Henrik Verwoerd. Yet these items seem almost shallow symbols within the greater portrait. The man relaxes on a bed at ease. Goldblatt stands intimately to observe this moment from the corner. That all these images can exist at once is a triumph of this overall work. Besides the scene unfolding the details of the room itself, the crude concrete walls, stone floor, and above all else the separated farm doors leading outside collide with the other, more modern accoutrements. This is not a portrait of poverty, though these subjects are likely poor. In one shot Goldblatt has captured a moment in the contemporary world, the politics of the outside world, and a past that is still relevant in the present.

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IX. David Goldblatt's Meta-Narrative

As seen in the above photograph, David Goldblatt is able to fuse moments past and present in a single frame. In so doing the everyday life of his Afrikaner subjects becomes steeped in an individual sense of history and local lore. Rather than rely on the nationalist concept of Afrikaner superiority, Goldblatt focuses on the small parts of Afrikaner life that are evocative of a group tied to the land and its history, and also a moment of impasse. By stringing together multiple counter-histories at once in *Some Afrikaners*, Goldblatt produces a subtle and yet highly political statement, asserting that the definition of Afrikaner is broad. Through his simple first person narrative the viewer comes to understand that Goldblatt's distinct representation of belonging is tied to his desired connection with his subjects, and in a sense a coming to terms with his vision of Afrikaners both real and imagined.

In an interview with Okwui Enwezor, Goldblatt remembers his interactions with local Afrikaners in his father's clothing store, and the palpable connection they exhibited to the land and to a distinct historical farming tradition while simultaneously personifying the prejudice of the politico-industrial system, which was tearing at that tradition,

> I would serve farmers and miners, people who carried the smell of dust and earth on them, and get a sense of the richness of life that I couldn't touch… I remember feeling almost jealous of Afrikaners because they appeared to have such a strong sense of their place in this country, a rootedness, a physical rootedness, which I felt too but which they generally denied me. I was merely a second or third generation South African. They had been here since 1652. They were the descendants of Voortrekkers and farmers, people of the land.[56]

While Goldblatt does not counter the mythology inherent in the description of the heroism of the Great Trek, his photographs speak nonetheless of the reality of this sense of belonging. For Goldblatt, the writings of Herman Charles Bosman, raw, inclusive, simple, was a point of access to rural Afrikaners. Goldblatt explicitly credits Bosman's semi-fictional stories of the 1920's and 1930's as an attempt to seek out his view of an Afrikaner reality. Beginning in the Marico Bushveld on the border of Botswana, the setting of many of Bosman's stories, Goldblatt found that reality or remnants thereof, and continued across rural areas in search of Afrikaners who might capture both the often complex and contradictory details of Bosman's novels. Furthermore the contradiction was more than poetic, it occurred in his real life.

Born in 1902, Herman Charles Bosman was a far cry from an upstanding citizen. A drunk and a murderer, (the sentenced was commuted to ten years hard labor), he seemed antithetical to nationalist-quality mythology, but nevertheless the perfect persona for myth. He was described by a drinking friend as, "a man, a woman, an angel, a devil, a tenderness, a cruelty, a brave man and a coward, an emasculate satyr, a womanizer, a

[56] Enwezor, 27, 16.

racist and a liberal. He searched for purity in filth, and, like Wilde, found stars in the gutter."[57] While many of Bosman's stories were published after his death, his work would become wildly popular. Though the drama of his real life might outshine the contents of his written work, he captured the rural environment and its people in a compelling and authentic manner. By embracing the world of Bosman, Goldblatt is able to expose the ambiguity of heritage and belonging. For his subjects it is certainly grounded and present, but not a grand narrative rather a small-scale history, straight out of Bosman.

By reading Bosman there is a clear link to the histories present in *Some Afrikaners*: some are real; some are hyperbolized and some are pure fiction. Goldblatt's narrative style also mirrors Bosman's. He writes in unadorned English inflected with Afrikaans. Thus in exploring the history and the heritage of his subjects he is not seeking out a unflagging truth, but rather a story with a lineage; lives with traceable pasts that halt for a moment at Goldblatt's shutter and then continue into the future. In *Makefing Road*, the insertion of historical events, the subjectivity of the author and the small stories that interrupt everyday life are closely related to *Some Afrikaners*. In writing about two Afrikaner farmers' return from the Boer war, Bosman writes,

> And Floris van Barnevelt put back in its place, on the wall of the voorkamer, the copy of his family tree that had been carried with him in his knapsack throughout the war. Then a new schoolmaster came to this part of the Marico, and after a long talk with Floris, the schoolmaster wrote behind Stephanus's name, between two curved lines that two words that you can still read there: obit Mafeking.[58]

[57] Valerie Rosenberg, *Herman Charles Bosman Between the Lines* (Cape Town: Struik Publishers, 2005),10.
[58] Bosman, 47.

The schoolteacher is likely Bosman himself, but the distinction between fiction and reality remains murky. In Goldblatt's photos and descriptions of his subjects and their contradictions we see Bosman, and to a larger extent the spirit of Afrikaners before nationalist re-historicizing efforts. Bosman moved to the Marico Bushveld in the 1920's and it is the setting from which he drew much of his inspiration in writing. The names that pepper Bosman's writing, Geels, Swanepoels, Hasbroeks appear again, some forty years later, in *Some Afrikaners Photographed*.

Goldblatt establishes a compelling dialogue with a counter-historical narrative of land and people in South Africa. As his foundation, Goldblatt puts in place a different mythology, a narrative that resonated with the working class Afrikaners he encountered growing up in Randfontein. The world of Bosman is explicitly captured but Goldblatt's commitment to creating an alternative narrative, one that reveals a vigorous and at times controversial spirit of rural Afrikaner belonging is present. Goldblatt's portrait of Tant Nellie Hasbroek is drawn directly from Bosman's biography and seems completely outside of nationalist politics **[Figure 18]**. The old women is seated and stares directly at the camera. Her hair is combed and bloused buttoned, speaking to the formality of her visitor. But her cracked glasses and tough expression illustrate a life of hard work. Goldblatt's accompanying prose links her life to a Bosman character, but also to a reality experienced by Bosman:

> When Herman Charles Bosman came to teach at the farmschool on Heimweeberg in 1926, he boarded for a time with her. Late one night, when a pranksome Bosman fired rifle shots over the roof of their house, she told her husband: That fellow is going to end on the gallows. A few months later Bosman shot and killed his stepbrother in Johannesburg. His death sentence was eventually commuted to a term of imprisonment and Bosman later went on to write stories about life in the Marico Bushveld.

From this photograph one imagines a double narrative, both the stories told from Nellie Hasbroek to Goldblatt but also the original story itself. Together these histories, written, oral and visual, fit into a quite different vision of Goldblatt's relationship to his subjects: both close and far away.

The presence of Bosman throughout *Some Afrikaners* runs across the different genres mentioned above. In a photograph of a white farmer and black worker moving a heavy tractor, the caption reads:

> Two men building a dam on the farm Drogedal…in the Marico Bushveld. This farm and its people, like others in the district appear in several of Herman Charles Bosman's stories. Years ago there was a more primitive dam here from which Bosman's characters, the 'conservative' Bekkers and De Bruyns drew water. Their graves, the stones broken but the inscriptions legible, are nearby.

Instead of focusing on the subject of this photograph, which could easily be looked at under the lens of race and class relations, the eye drifts up the dirt road, ushered forward by the farmer's hat **[Figure 19]**. It feels as though one is in the presence of Bosman's world, his real life—but in this context fictionalized characters are to be found just around the bend. Again, the modern and the historical collide but in a seamless manner. There are no notable signifiers of Afrikaner Nationalism or even modernity. Rather the past and the present are at play in the soil, in the work and in the narrative.

Elizabeth Edwards writes "The photograph awakens a desire to know that which it cannot show for it is perhaps an ultimate unknowability, which is at the centre of the photographs's historical challenge."[59] Footnote The change that occurred in the above photograph happened in the past. A new dam is being constructed in place of the old. Goldblatt, however, seems to imply that history can be awakened in the pages of Bosman's novels and in the history that is embedded in the soil. Bosman's presence does

[59] Edwards, 16.

not deny the inequity that appears in *Some Afrikaners*, what Neville Dubow calls, "the other face of the land, the ugly South African reality of inequitable land ownership, the kind of rootedness that derives from uprooting others," however, it points to the initial taxonomy of a people, the Afrikaners, before they were conscripted into the political myth-making of elite Afrikaner nationalism.[60] In this portrait Goldblatt asks his viewers, and perhaps even himself, to consider how the issues of possession and dispossession and the activities of everyday life, might exist within different historical lenses.

X. Conclusion: David Goldblatt's Present Pasts

Goldblatt, like Bosman presents alternative realities to written histories. His images, nevertheless, speak of a group of people both dynamically changed and unchanged by history. Once gets a sense that the wall hangings may change, daughters and sons may marry and move to larger towns, but their faces and hands bear the marks of a life lived in a distinctly rural, and distinctly Afrikaner setting. Goldblatt's image of a bride seems like an archetypal wedding photograph until the viewer takes a closer look **[Figure 20]**. White calla lilies frame her head, which is crowned with tiara and veil. Bits of confetti are stuck to her coiffure, noting that this portrait is an anti-climax to the celebration. She smiles rather excitedly, or nervously at the camera. The filmy veil leads the viewer's eyes to her hands as she fidgets with the ring, and it is here that Goldblatt points to the specifics of Afrikaners on the margins in this portrait, the long fingers and large hands that have surely seen farm work.

[60] Neville Dubow, "Constructs: Reflections on a Thinking Eye," in *David Goldblatt, South Africa: The Structure of Things Then* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1998), 29.

More than his candid textual introduction and captions for the photographs Goldblatt's emulation of Bosman's style and world brings about a confrontation with the establishment of history and time. Each portrait is steeped in certain historical narrative, one, which places the subjects as peripheral to a larger, newer and transformed national narrative. Nevertheless a distinct sense of continuity is denied. Rather than stress a forward movement from the past to the present the work as a whole is fragmented. One must look closely at dates, names and places to grasp connections. In this way I find that *Some Afrikaners* functions in a vein similar to the fragmented narratives of the writer W.G. Sebald. Sebald's pairing of shadowy text and image speak to the historical forces which suppress memory and the uneasiness of recalling past events. According to Maya Barzilai, Sebald's novel *Austerlitz* "encourages a comparison between memory and photography, but also allows the reader to gain, experientially a sense of the disruptive effect of the belated return to the past."[61] In *Some Afrikaners*, there is a similar lack of a narrative flow, and the viewer must pick up and interpret scraps, then place them within a thinly laid out timeline. Even with his introduction, which states Goldblatt's ambitions and biography he refuses to state clearly what the history of Afrikanerdom was. He waits until 1998 with *South Africa: The Structure of Things Then* to write a more linear history of South Africa and Apartheid once Afrikaner dominance was slipping.

I find this absence of a linear historical narrative in *Some Afrikaners* to underscore a deep reflection on the difficulties of finding a historical space for his rural subjects. While there exists a palpable pull towards modernity (nee the future), there are few images that show actual transition, only the fear of expulsion and erasure as seen in the

[61]Maya Barzilai, "On Exposure: Photography and Uncanny Memory in W. G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten and Austerlitz." W. G. Sebald: History - Memory - Trauma.* Eds. Scott Denham and Mark R. McCulloh. (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 207.

photograph of Piet Swanepoel. The aforementioned wedding photograph references a past and a future, which defines the potential of upward mobility. However, within the actual photographic frame both past and future merge into an inseparable moment, one, which raises the question of how rural Afrikaners might perceive their present conditions so highlighted by Goldblatt's photographic technique. This technique emulates the presentness that is so distinct in Bosman's stories: a sense that the reader is actually with the subjects.

Sebald's work is helpful within this context because temporality exists in such a non-linear form. The present, though confusing and jumbled is in fact the only site of knowledge. Jessica Dubow defines Sebald's style in a way, which illuminates what I have been stressing in Goldblatt's work as the rupture between past and future, between the signifiers employed by observer and observed to signal a bond to a yet ungraspable, ever changing historical narrative. Dubow writes of Sebald's stories,

> The historical process is parachuted into the activity of the presentness, into the immoderate moment of now, to awaken a very different understanding of historical and temporal process…inassimilable, inadmissible to the normativity of its surrounds, it contains something incomplete and incapable of being completed in the terms of what has literally become history. [62]

When one considers even the micro narratives in *Some Afrikaners,* for instance the small handful of images from a single day taken at the wedding in Barkley East, there are complications in the temporal process. It is unclear to the viewer which image comes first, that of the bride, her family lined up outside the church, or her sitting nervously with her parents at a banquet table. Such photographs stand in as a microcosm for the entire work. While dates are given, allowing for a general sense of periodicity, mention

[62] Jessica Dubow, ""Case Interrupted: Benjamin, Sebald and the Dialectical Image," *Critical Inquiry* 33 (Summer 2007), 822.

of the past and the future comes in the terms of Goldblatt himself and through his Bosman-inspired narrative.

As I have indicated all along it is the function of the simultaneous margining of different histories, which situate the present moment as intricately multi-sited. Yet where that history begins and ends is left open-ended, even unknown. Dubow, in connecting Walter Benjamin's similarly fragmented *Arcades Project* with Sebald 's work writes about the eschewing of a "once upon a time" narrative and of "things that speak of an elsewhere and elsewhen…attendance to the micro rather than its connection to a system." While the National Party re-historicizing efforts loom large in this work and cast instability across many of the rural images, the sheer captivation of Goldblatt's compositions further deny that one history is either interwoven or part of another. This is perhaps his greatest gesture of connection and sympathy towards his rural subjects. It is also the mode in which he draws out his subjectivity; he can find common ground with the farmer, miner, shopkeeper based in a word or small fragmented moments, and this is what separates him and them from the politics of the National Party. While it is clear that several Afrikaner subjects portray characteristics he finds contradictory, it seems too simplistic to place them outside of his biographical project and within the narrative realm of the National Party. Thus the viewer must consider each photograph separately and the photograph challenges the viewer to consider the work as a complicated whole. Nevertheless, the success of the *Some Afrikaners Photographed* lies in the individual portraits and in their presentness and wholeness, while the simultaneous lack of these elements yields the greatest site of complexity.

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Image Appendix

For each photograph from *Some Afrikaners Photographed* I have included the entire accompanying text.

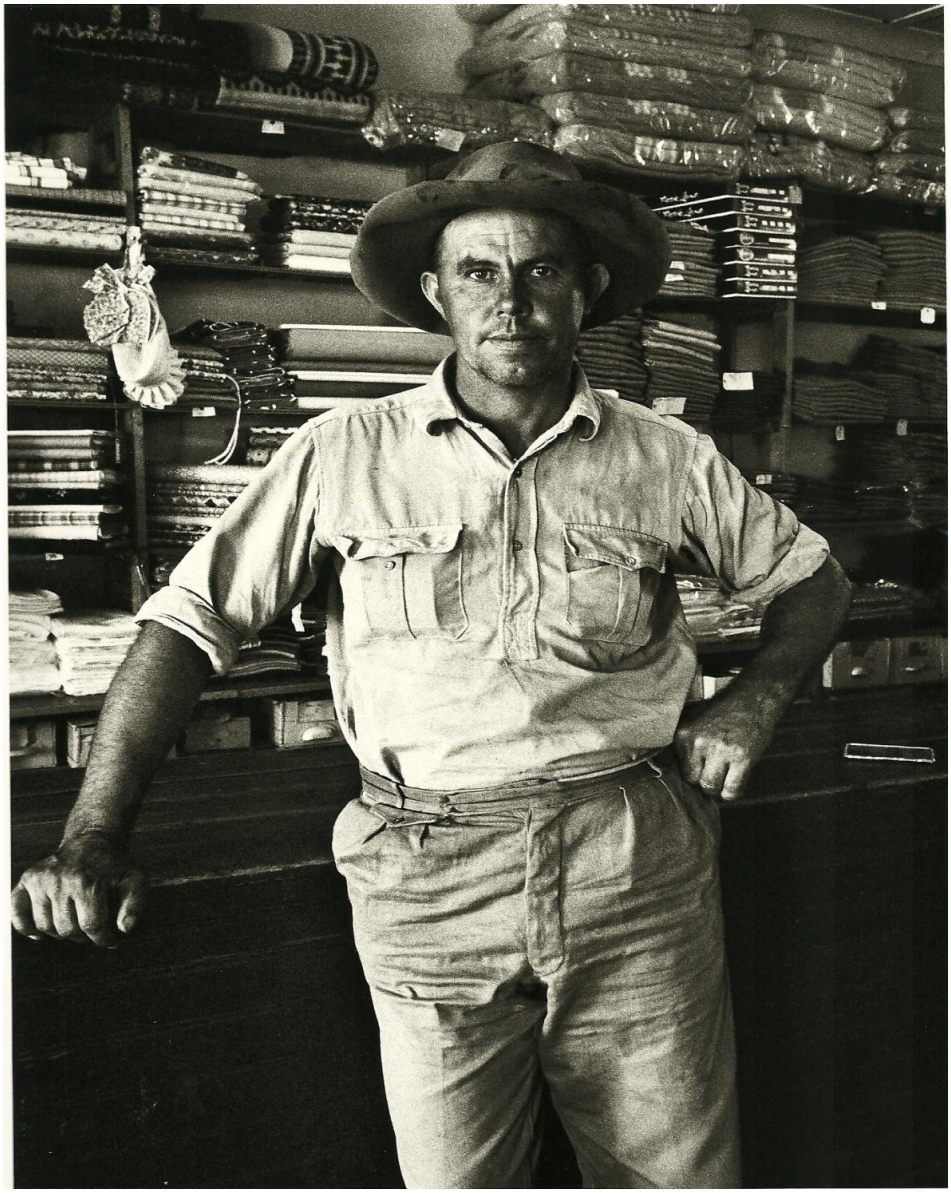

Figure 1.

A farmer in Krisjan Ceel's store at Zwingli in the Marico Bushveld.

Figure 2.

The farm Quaggesfontein in the Great Karoo on a summer afternoon.

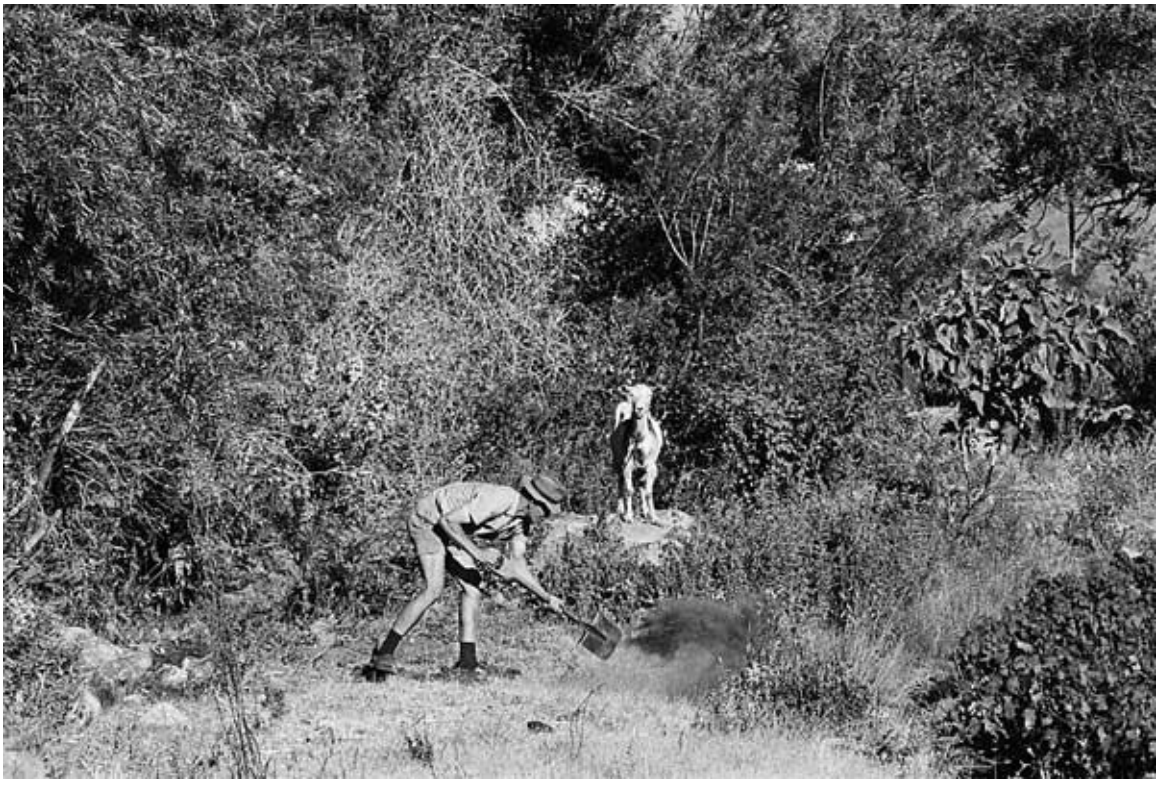

Figure 3.

Piet Swanepoel clears ground for planting on his farm in Gamkaskloof. He left the valley in 1992, the last of the Kloof farmers to do so.

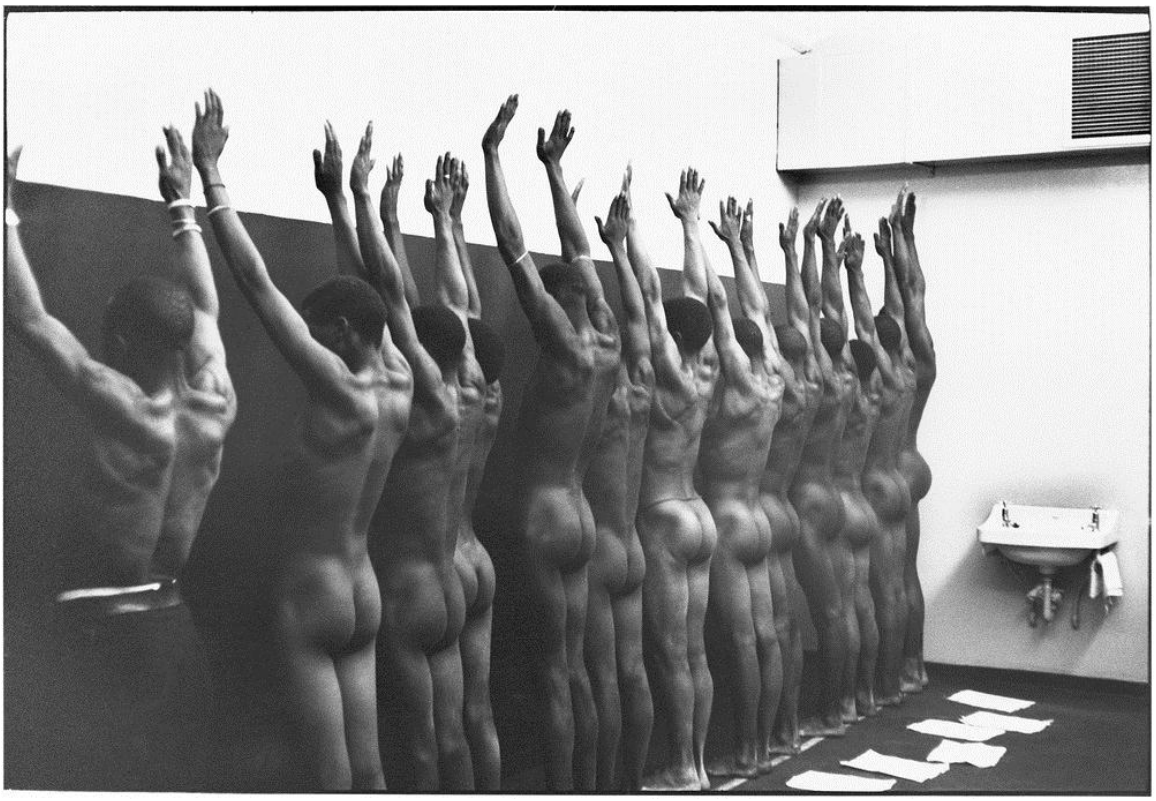

Figure 4.

Ernest Cole, “Mine Recruitment.” From *House of Bondage*, 1967.

Figure 5.

Collection of Marijke du Toit. Family photograph of maternal great-grandparents on their farm in marchand, 1930's.

Figure 6.

Volkspelers wait to perform traditional dances on the Day of the Covenant, in celebration of the Boers' victory over the Zulus in the Battle of Blood River in 1838, when the Boers promised God that if He gave them victory they would forever honour the day. Still celebrated as a public holiday, 16 December is now know as Day of Reconciliation.

Figure 7.

Mrs L.C. Rall, widow and farmer in her cattle kraal.

Figure 8.

Senior members of the National Party listen to speeches during the 50th anniversary celebrations of the National Party in Transvaal. From left to right: Senator Jan de Klerk, Minister of Education, Arts and Sciene, his wife Corrie, Daan de Wet Nel, Minister of Bantu Education and Development, and his wife, Jim Fouche, Minister of Defense, and and oudstryder who was oresent at De Wildt when General J.B.M. Hertzog made his famous 'Suid-Afrika eerste' (South Africa first) speech there on 7 December 1912.

Figure 9.

Once a year, on the birthday of the grandmother of these girls, this family came together from many parts of South Africa, Here they are seen watching movies they had made of each other on pervious birthdays.

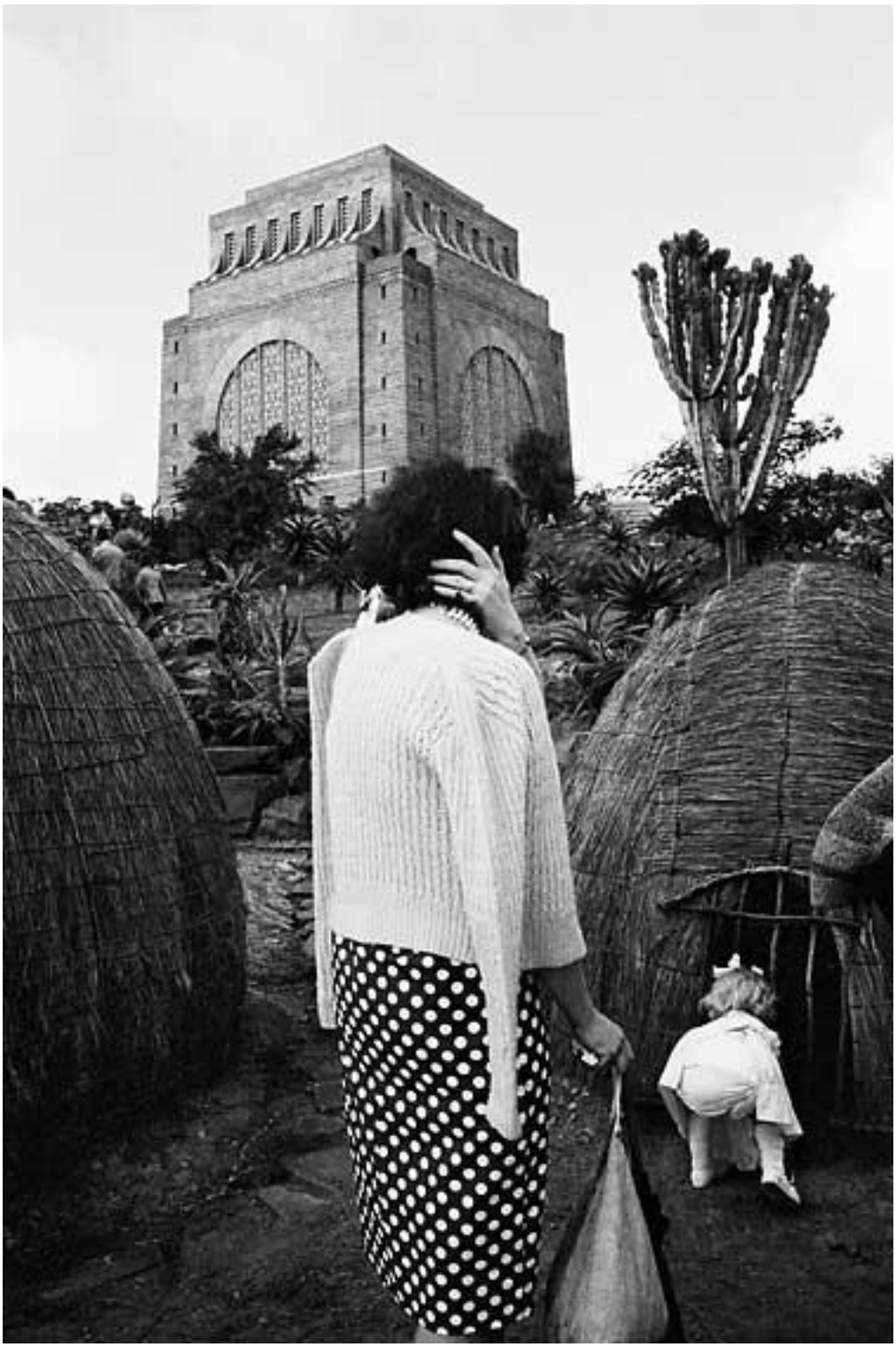

Figure 10.

Child with a replica of a Zulu hut at the Voortrekker Monument, on the Day of the Covenant. This day commemorated the vow taken by Voortrekkers before the Battle of Blood River, that if God gave them victory over the Zulus they would always keep it as one of thanksgiving.

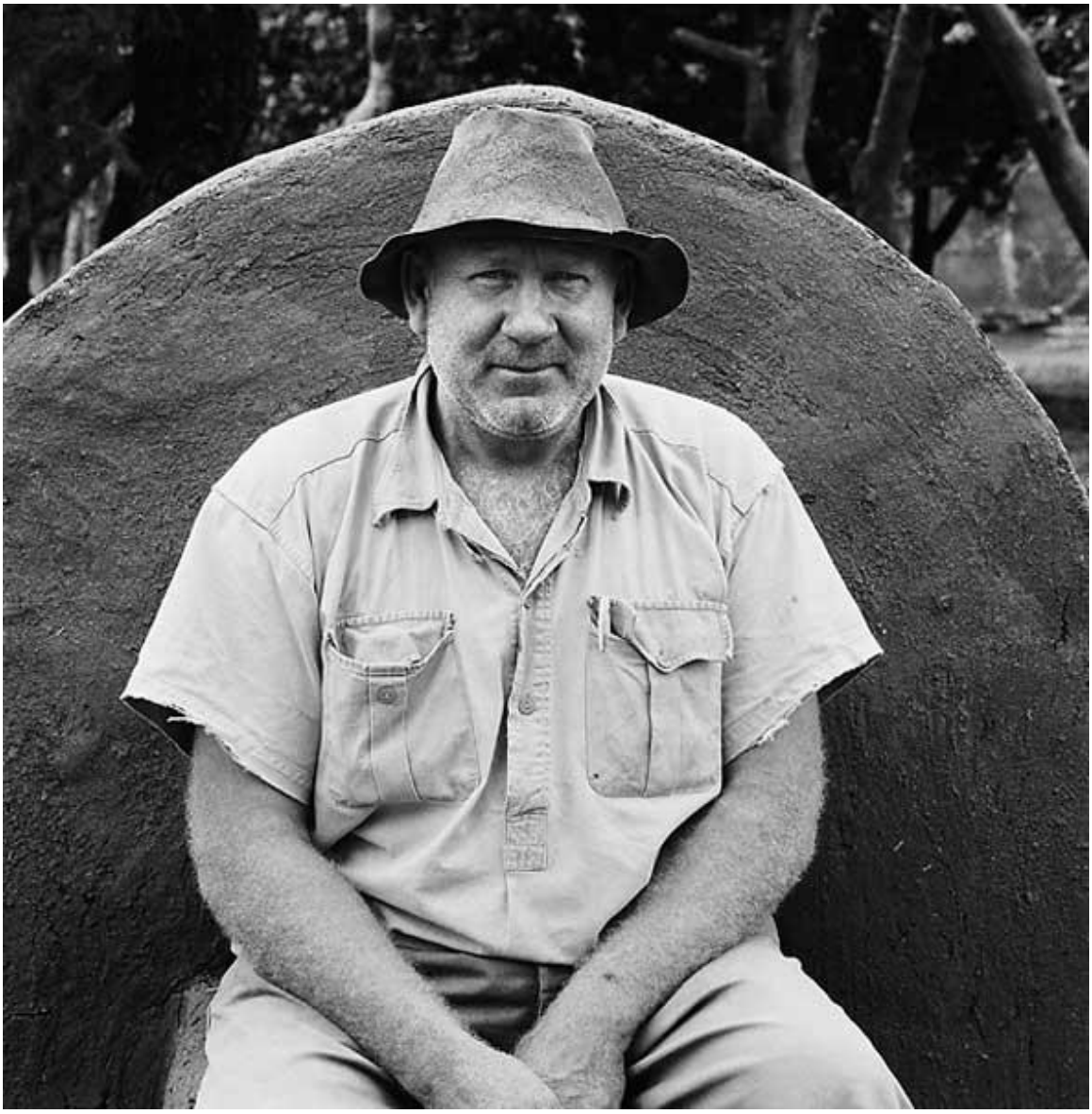

Figure 11.

Frik Loubser, farmer, shopkeeper and postmaster in the Marico Bushveld, sitting before the bakoond in which his wife baked bread. He spoke of Harold Wilson and Britain's finances; of his son, the fastest runner at Nietverdiend school; of the effect on his shop of the removal of African families from the area under the government's racial laws; of the regrettable tendancy to serve instant coffee on Marico stoeps; and of the bushveld which he loved. Although the area was densely covered by thorn trees he nutured a swarthaak in his backyard through a seven-year drought.

Figure 12.

Her Husband's brother Johannes and nephew Derrick in Martjie Marais kitchen in Gamkaskloof, or Die Hel as it came to be known. The people in this isolated vally in the Swartberg mountains gew fruit and dried it. Before the road was opened in 1962, they would take their produce in a caravan of donkeys over the mountains to Prince Albert or along the Gamka River to Calitzdorp once or twice a year. There they would exchange their produce for the things they needed. With the road came bakkies and radios and detergents and, when they grew older, the youngsters went to the towns and did not come back. In 1967, when this photograph was taken, life in the Kloof still retained much of the quality of isolation of people's lives there over the years. Gradually, however, the farmers left and, by 1992, they had all gone. Their houses became derelict and their orchards and fields overgrown. Some of the land has subsequently been bought by townspeople and some taken over by the Department of Nature Conservation. Today (2006) Gamskakloof is part of the Zwartberg Nature Reserve; houses have been prettily, if synthetically, restored and tourists and backpackers are welcomed. The only Kloover still there, Annetjie Mostert-Houbert, a daughter of the Kloof, tried valiantly to impart a sense of the history of the place on its many visitors.

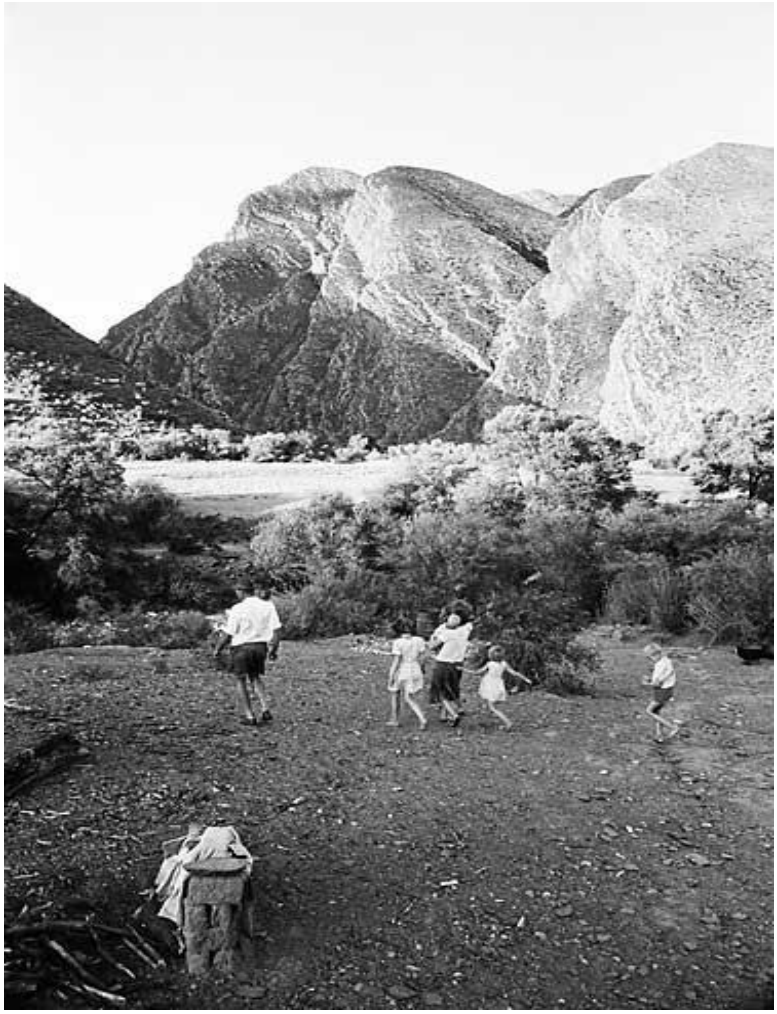

Figure 13.

Koot and Hettie Cordier and their children going to visit their next-door neighbours, the Snymans.

Figure 14.

Johannes van der Linde, farmer and major in the local army reserve, with his head labourer ‘Ou Sam’. In the manner of respectful indirect address used in Afrikaans as between a parent and a child, Van der Linde asked, ‘Old Sam, does the Baas swear at you?’ To which the reply was, ‘No Baas, the Baas does not swear at me.’

Figure 15.

Erik Stockenstrom, "Johanna Hermina Bezuidenhout, Skoondogter van Martha Bezuidenhout," 1921.

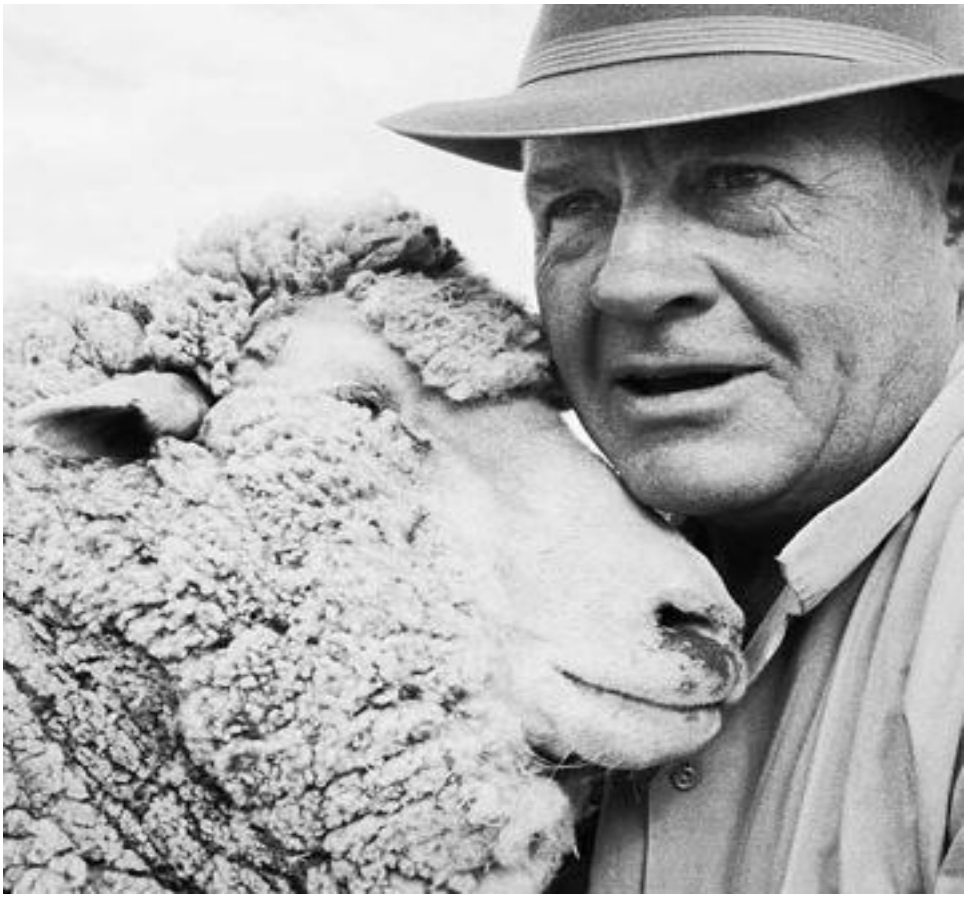

Figure 16.

J.G. Loots of the farm Quaggasfontein where his family had farmed for more than 200 years. There were several prize ewes. He called each in turn by name, and each came to be petted.

Figure 17.

Tant Nellie Haasbroek of the farm Heimweeberg in the Marico Bushveld. She spent the days in her old farmhouse and nights at her son's place nearby. When Herman Charles Bosman came to teach at the farm school on Heimweeberg in 1926, he boarded for a time with her. Late one night, when a pranksome Bosman fired rifle shots over the roof of their house, she told her husband: That fellow is going to end on the gallows. A few months later Bosman shot and killed his stepbrother in Johannesburg. His death sentence was eventually commuted to a term of imprisonment and Bosman later went on to write stories about life in the Marico Bushveld

Figure 18.

Lewies Nel in his voorkamer. On the battery-powered turntable Jeremy Taylor was singing ‘Ag pleeze Deddy won’t you take us to the drive-in’

Figure 19.

Two men building a dam on the farm Drogedal, or Droëdal, in the Marico Bushveld. This farm and its people, like others in the district, appear in several of Herman Charles Bosman's stories. Year ago there was a more primitive dam here from which Bosman' characters, the 'conservative' Bekker and De Bruyns, drew water. Their graves, the stones broken but the inscriptions legible, are nearby. And at the verge of the farm not far from Krisjian Geel's shop at Zwingli, on the 'government' road to Bechuanaland (Botswana), the remains of Jurie Bekker's post office were still (1964) to be seen. Through the thorn trees of Drogedal you can see Abjaterskop, which, when you lying in the grass, 'looks like the toe of your boot.'

Figure 20.

The bride. The wedding took place on her father's farm near Barkly East. She met the groom when she was working in a café and he in the Magistrate's Court at Zastron. Now he was to begin as a clerk on the railways. 'Ek wil opgaan' (I want to rise), he said. They would start married life in Welkom in the Free State where his father worked on the gold mines.