

ARCHIVE, INJURY and IMAGE: IMAGING FREEDOM THROUGH the PHOTOGRAPHIC
ARCHIVE of the RACIALLY OPPRESSED

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Abstract

In the mid-1990s Jacques Derrida's book "Archive Fever" (1995) sparked a lively theoretical debate that focused on practices of reading the archive, the relationship of the archive to power and the gaps within the archive. We need to ask, given the context of colonial and various forms of racial power, in what other ways can we consider the archive? Anthony Bogues (2011) has drawn attention to the "archive of the ordinary," and a sense that the interpretation of all archives might turn around questions of representation and ways of reimagining a past. What are the ways in which we can reimagine ways of being through archives that are not constructed by colonial and racial power but by the once subaltern, the colonized? These are some of the questions with which this paper will engage, using the photographs of Movie Snaps Photographic Studio in Cape Town as an entry point to consider contemporary issues of the visual, memory and representation.

Keywords

Movie Snaps
Cape Town
Apartheid
Photography
Self-Representation
Archive

History is the subject of a construction whose site is not homogenous, empty time, but time filled with now time. (Walter Benjamin, 2005, p. 395)

Memory work is a method and practice of unearthing and making public untold stories, of lives lived out on the borderlands, lives for which the central interpretive devices of the culture don't quite work... Engaging as it does the psychic and the social, memory work bridges the divide between inner and outer worlds.
(Annette Kuhn 2002, p. 9)

Through *Movie Snaps*, a street photographic production dispersed across a number of family collections in homes across Cape Town, South Africa, I will look for ways that gesture towards a duty to history and to imagine freedom after racial oppression. Photographs sit at the intersection of past, present and future, making them well-placed to consider how those found in homes can bypass mainstream archives¹ and underscore history as being-in-the-present. This paper will focus on photography and the archive of *Movie Snaps* photography, self-representation, imagining freedom, remembering and forgetting.

Like many in South Africa, I have been shaped by centuries-old events that contextualize today and framed, before and during the era of apartheid, the photographic productions of the *Movie Snaps* studio. In the midst of apartheid, street photographers from that studio snapped those who appeared to be “well-heeled” but their subjects were across the racial divide and carefully chosen, for they had to be able to afford to pay for the photograph, which would have been developed and printed in the studio. A typical *Movie Snaps* photograph (I have found only a few colour hand-painted larger format photographs) is a nondescript, black-and-white image about half the size of a postcard, and are found in homes across the country and the globe.

As a “coloured”² woman who grew up on the edge of District Six and whose grandparents were forcibly removed through apartheid³ legislation, I have been committed to thinking about apartheid afterlives in an attempt to make sense of a past of which many of us were not the authors. I am aware of the need to guard the past, to give it a presence in the “here” and the “now” and to emphasise our obligation to remember – an obligation that must include a reflexive and honest acknowledgment of the stark divisions and inequalities that are the lived realities of the majority of South Africans. These questions have profound implications for post 1994 South Africa, as they seek to confront legacies of historical injustice which continue to play themselves out in often tragically violent ways on several socio-economic levels in South Africa.

Cape Town

The port city of Cape Town on the south-west edge of the African continent is commonly referred to as the “Mother City”. Dutch East India Company administrator Jan van Riebeeck set up a refreshment station for passing ships in 1652, and it gradually became a halfway point for trade between the East and the West (Worden, Heyningen & Smith, 1998). Cape Town was viewed as the birthplace of modernity in South Africa, and the base from which those endowed with power ruled the country (Pieterse cited by O'Connell, 2015). It is a city that geographically and visibly gestures towards all directions, particularly towards the rest of the continent. Cape Town has been shaped by waves of

¹ Margaret Hedstrom (2002) discusses the notion of archival interfaces, through which archives and archivists shape representation and the past.

² Apartheid racial categories were complex, including “native”, “coloured”, “Asian” or “white”.

³ Apartheid, which means “separateness” was legislated in 1948 in South Africa and ended with the first democratic elections in 1994 with Nelson Mandela as the first democratically-elected president.

regulation, evacuation and displacement, especially around health scares such as the smallpox outbreak in the 1880s and the bubonic plague in 1901 (Smith, 1995). The same rhetoric of contamination and control was used to justify the apartheid legislated forced evictions of District Six and other parts of the city that began in the 1960s as a result of apartheid-enacted legislation, the Group Areas Act of 1950 that dictated who could live where as a result of race.⁴

By all accounts, Cape Town, like most, if not all South African cities, remains a divided city. Against the backdrop of the iconic Table Mountain, a landmark which *over-looks* its less privileged urban edges, the city is framed as spaces of simultaneous absence and presence, punted as a welcoming tourist destination, whilst at the same time, oblivious to the lives of millions of its inhabitants who live on the periphery and in the shadows of its mountain. The city is violently marked in all sorts of ways through the residues of colonialism, slavery and apartheid made manifest in on-going gentrification and evictions and all the socio-economic ills for those who continue to pay the price demanded by apartheid. For this reason, the city offers a chance to think about how questions of representation, memory and freedom can be thought about and practiced in a catastrophic aftermath.

The panoramic vista from the top of Table Mountain is awe-inspiring. One can easily see the harbour, Robben Island, infamous for the incarceration of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners during apartheid, and, closer to the foot of the mountain, the city centre with the Houses of Parliament. What is also clear from the mountain is the pentagonal structure of the Castle of Good Hope, the oldest colonial building in South Africa, the foundations of which were laid in 1665 and built with the labour of local men and women, slaves and Dutch East India Company workers.⁵ It is impossible to miss this imposing structure that is surrounded by a moat, as it sits resolutely in the city, oblivious and impervious to the thousands of “black” and “coloured” men and women who make their way to work in the city in the early hours, and then leave again at night. Still visible to passers-by of the Castle are the names of the five bastions of the castle, which were named after the main titles of Willem, the Prince of Orange: Leerdam, Buuren, Catzenellenbogen, Nassau and Orange.

The castle is adjacent to the Cape Town railway station and taxi rank and the Grand Parade⁶ all of which have no small bearing on any conversation about the realities of what it means to have a colonial, slave and apartheid past in a democratic country that is among the most unequal in the world.⁷ The imposing and ever-present structure of the Castle sits on the edge of District Six which saw sixty thousand people subjected to forced removals that began in the late 1960s as a result of apartheid that was legislated in 1948, but which was born out of the preceding practices of colonialism and racial slavery. The Castle has outlasted the abolition of slavery, world wars as well as thousands of homes decimated by apartheid bulldozers across the city and the suburbs. It continues to dwarf many of the surrounding structures such as the District Six Museum and local churches and mosques.

The view from the mountain also reveals the largely “white” and upmarket Atlantic seaboard and the leafy green suburbs of Claremont, Newlands and Constantia which are in sharp contrast to the rest

⁴ According to Platsky and Walker (1984) it is estimated that in the period 1960-1982, about 3.5 million people experienced evictions under various race-based relocation policies in apartheid South Africa. They were removed from places such as District Six, Constantia and Harfield Village in Cape Town and dumped in inhospitable and unfamiliar townships – named in cruel irony – such as Ocean View, Atlantis and Lavender Hill. The irony being that there are neither hills, views, lavender or ocean vistas from these areas. The apartheid government administered their dictum of division, for they ensured that families were not relocated with their familiar, well-known neighbours but forced to join completely unknown people from a different area. Families who had previously occupied the same block in the district, now lived scattered, in any one of several council areas.

⁵ See <http://www.castleofgoodhope.co.za>. (Accessed 23 March 2018).

⁶ Originally known as “Wapen Plein” (Square of Arms) and the site of Jan van Riebeeck’s original fort in the 1650’s, the Parade has always been closely associated with its immediate neighbour, the Castle. For centuries, the Parade has been a place where people gathered to celebrate, protest or seek refuge.

⁷ See Merton (2017).

of the vista, the Cape Flats, the flat, dusty stretch of land which has come to be seen and understood as the homes of “black” and “coloured” inhabitants, established largely as a result of forced removals.

The business of separateness and un-belonging in Cape Town is clearly and powerfully illustrated by Van Riebeeck’s Hedge⁸, which, in the city’s famed botanical gardens, Kirstenbosch, continues to grow. This Bitter Almond hedge, planted by Jan Van Riebeeck in 1660 to protect the Dutch settlement cut off the settlers from the rest of the continent, and severed the indigenous population from land traditionally used for grazing. Movie Snaps images are found in the long shadows cast by the mountain and on the fringes of that hedge, hinting of dreams deferred on the one hand, yet, on the other, illuminating spectacular flashes of freedom during racially oppressive times. These photographs offer a chance to construct a new whole, recognising that real freedom – being free from domination – comes in all sorts of guises and is distinct from emancipation at the polls. For as the persistent fault lines in South Africa make clear, the past refuses to subside. This is echoed by urban scholar Edgar Pieterse (2015) who says

“In many ways, Cape Town is still in the throes of its past. There is a connection between unable to recognise the emergence of the new with an unresolved sense of loss and a nostalgia for a past for which we do not have a language.”

Remembering and forgetting: the photographic archive of the oppressed

The roots of the archive, asserts Algerian born French theorist Jacques Derrida in his 1995 essay “Mal d’archive” (Archive Fever) lie in the etymology of the word “archive” which has a connection to the Greek word *arkheion* (meaning place, address) of the *archontes* (those who rule and command). David Bell (2004) astutely sums up Derrida’s understanding of archives, power and violence where the notion of gate keeping, knowledge and rule of law is inscribed both in and by the archive. As Bell says (p. XXX)

“[I]n this space, set off from public place, rulers have the right not only to store official documents, but also to interpret them. The right to govern is always already a hermeneutic right, the right to assign meaning to and to make sense of the documents which, taken together, furnish the foundation and justification for the law.”

An archive has several routines, among them gathering, selecting, and preserving records. Within these activities, sets of power relationships exist between archivists, institutions, publics and material which in turn, create and preserve a status quo. How then are we to imagine a different archive? What are the ways of resisting this power? In his book “Power/Knowledge” (1980), Michel Foucault famously and extensively comments on power relations, the relationships of subjects, domination and exploitation. Crucial is the question of degree, of the absolute devastation of racial violence in South Africa. In order to maintain its dominion, it has to obliterate everything, offering resistance, ceasing to stop even when nothing is seemingly left – not even the traces of bodies, of experiences, of lives – resulting in a place of “less than absence”, of “less than nothingness”, a space that is devoid of what may have been. In some way, this is evident in the landscape of District Six with its barren spaces that are devoid of homes and lives. Foucault asks how this power is exercised. What are the practices of total control? How can we understand it in ways that allow us to make sense of the present? In response, we can imagine the visual self-representation of the oppressed as one that speaks directly to colonial – and by extension apartheid – power, confronting its operations and its ghostly traces which continue to perform in post-South Africa.

⁸ See <http://www.zubeidajaffer.co.za/van-riebeecks-hedge/> (Accessed 16 August 2017).



Figure 1. Siona and Ma (1967) courtesy of the author



Figure 2. Movie Snaps (n.d.) Image courtesy of the Centre for Curating the Archive, University of Cape Town



Figure 3. Movie Snaps (n.d.) Image courtesy of the Centre for Curating the Archive, University of Cape Town



Figure 4. Movie Snaps (n.d.) Image courtesy of the Centre for Curating the Archive, University of Cape Town

A few years ago, while rummaging through a shoebox of family photographs belonging to my father, I found three 2.5" x 3.5" black-and-white photos taken on almost the same spot in Cape Town's city centre. One of them is of my grandmother and me on a shopping trip to town. 'Ma' as we knew her, is immaculately dressed, her hair coiffed and wearing an impeccable two-piece suit, complete with gloves, a brooch and a handbag. Striding confidently, she is holding me in the crook of her right arm, her handbag swinging freely from her left. I am staring into the camera lens, my grandmother is looking ahead, flanked to her right by a passerby who appears to be a "white" man, holding a cigarette and looking downwards. There is an equally well-dressed woman to her rear. I think that I must be about ten months old. I too am beautifully turned out, in a long-sleeved dress, ankle socks and white shoes which means that this image was taken during apartheid when areas were segregated and where bodies and spaces were clearly demarcated.

Despite this, our photograph was taken by a street photographer in Darling Street, just a stone's throw from the Cape Town mayoral office, The Cape Town City Hall as well as the Houses of Parliament, and in front of the General Post Office. This fading photograph shows a woman clearly in command of her space. In mid-step, she is looking straight ahead; she is purposeful and unashamed, her attention to dress, gesture and detail attesting to how she saw herself, in contrast to how others saw her as a "coloured" woman.

I am drawn to this image for not only do I find that it is the earliest image of my grandmother and me, but it clearly places me in the apartheid city in 1967. More importantly, the photograph shows that I am held firmly by my grandmother, as she resolutely commands us to take our place in the city. I continue to find three more images of this nature, all of which were taken on almost the same spot, but at different times. One was taken of my mother as a fourteen-year-old in her school uniform (figure X), one of my maternal grandfather, Bareyam Singh, as a business man in his suit and hat, which I calculate was taken in about 1941 (figure Y), and the last of my father and his cousin, Melvin Gassen, as two dapper young men (figure Z). The ink on the reverse of the images indicates that they were all taken by a photographer from the *Movie Snaps* studio.

I contacted several family members and friends of my parents and enquired as to whether they too had images of this sort – all of them had at least one. As my god-mother, Margaret Dowling, née Moses, commented, "We did not have a camera in the house and this was the only way to get snapped." All described a similar experience and made the same comments regarding these photographers – they were to be found patrolling outside the General Post Office, the Grand Parade and Cape Town Station and were either "coloured" or Indian. You were photographed in passing and then approached by the photographer, given a numbered card and invited to collect the image a week later at a cost of 2/6d. Images were all black-and-white and measured 4" by 2". If there was a passerby that you didn't like in your photograph, the studio simply guillotined this away, resulting in an even smaller one.

These small images appear tenuously fragile when viewed against the spectacular backdrop – as Njabulo Ndebele (1994) writes of apartheid itself. Apartheid legislation and activities detailed proclamations of racial categories, the well-orchestrated raids on hotel rooms to round up couples who were traversing the colour lines and the majesty of the military parades of young men doing their compulsory military service.

From its inception and particularly after the arrival of the Kodak camera in the 1880s, all around the globe the camera changed the way that the world was seen and understood. Nor was the domestic scene immune to its gaze for it changed the way that the family imagined itself. Not only were many families now able to record themselves but the photographs circulated widely among family members

and friends. The landmark *Van Kalker Photographic Studio* set up in 1937 in Woodstock, an area adjoining District Six, was an example of this, and it allowed residents to document their significant moments and celebrations, as many did not own their own cameras.

The *Movie Snaps* studio – which operated from the late 1930s to the early 1980 – produced hundreds of thousands of photographs, and trained scores of “black” and “coloured” photographers, like Noor Mohammed, a former District Six resident who comments that “We called the owner of the studio Mr. Snaps! He just gave us a camera and off we went. We never owned cameras!”⁹ These innocuous objects speak of a common experience across divides including race, gender, religion and class, the memories of which, now, however evoke completely different responses, according to the dictates of racial legislation and lines of history.

I tracked down hundreds of photographs and conducted scores of interviews with ageing men and women who saw my appeal in local newspapers. These conversations were to take a familiar pattern. Almost always I was offered tea and cake, invited to sit in a lounge and as I took my place, observed how carefully these aide-memoire were taken out of shoeboxes and stained envelopes and proudly shown off. I’ve yet to find one in a frame or on a mantelpiece. Initial comments included “Everyone has a Movie Snaps!”, “In those days we sugared our stockings so by the time we returned home from shopping we all had sticky legs!” And “This was one of our neighbours...we used to go smoke by her...in tent style dress...and a beehive”. “That is my mother”. “This is me.”

Almost imperceptibly though the mood would change, when asked about events surrounding the image, with usually erudite men and women who moments earlier had regaled me about their lives, recognising that what these images revealed too, was a moment that spoke about being deemed less-than-human, of unmitigated loss and an inability to settle after their lives were torn apart by eviction notices and bulldozers. They seemed unable to reconcile that which *Movie Snaps* depicted – photographs that showed lives of imaginings and defiance, manifested in commanding gazes, an inordinate amount of care in dress and presentation – down to the bow in the hair that had to be “just so” – but shadowed by a series of “posts”, a post of loss, of injury and debilitating incomprehensibility, and seemingly no avenues to attend to these at all.

The photograph has the ability to “fix the past” – it freezes a moment in time and space, but also, it has the chance to remedy it, to put together that which has been broken. It has the ability to resist a particular discourse of oppression, justice and freedom and in so doing, compels us to renegotiate relationships between the viewer and the viewed. *Movie Snaps* compels us to acknowledge – and right – a historical wrong. Photographs are looked at – and as Gillian Rose (2013, p. 13) asks: “What does the photograph contribute to this looking?” In answer, she refers to Roland Barthes who contends:

“Photographs show both what is culturally coded and what exceeds that coding”. So, while these photographs speak of a particular mode of image making, which is embedded in the history of the genre, so too do these images exceed this frame (Rose, 2013, p. 13).”

Movie Snaps may speak of apparently banal grandmother-granddaughter shopping trips to the city, but they also speak of an existence of a certain way of life, a life that includes self-representation and flashes of freedom in times of un-freedom. In looking at these images, by turning our gaze to these quotidian objects, we are able to *see* the oppressed rather than simply look. In so doing, we are able to attest to Barthes’ (1981, p. 87) claim that “Photography never lies: or rather, it can lie as to the meaning of the thing, being by nature tendentious, never as to its existence”. While these images may lie about

⁹ *Movie Snaps* is an ongoing project of mine that has, since 2015, been realised in an exhibition, “*Movie Snaps: Cape Town Remembers Differently*” as well as a 26-minute film documentary that included interviews with *Movie Snaps* photographers, family members of the studio owner, Abraham Herwitz and families across Cape Town who own these images.

something, they cannot lie about the certain lives being lived at the moment of exposure. We therefore begin to comprehend racial oppression as being a series of catastrophic reverberations, understand loss, victimhood and freedom in other ways, the times-space lapse of the photograph affording us the chance to bring history into a contested and unresolved present.

Do these collections speak simultaneously of both a presence and absence of lives? Do they have a punctual moment in that they produce more than just regret and nostalgia? Do they speak of something irrevocable, and unbridgeable absences? Roland Barthes (Barthes in Rose, 2013, p. 13) argues that the particularity of a photograph in terms of space and time was central to the effects of its ontology, saying:

“The type of consciousness the photograph involves is truly unprecedented, since it established not a consciousness of the being-there of the thing (which any copy could provide) but an awareness of its having-being-there. What we have is a new space-time category: spatial immediacy and temporal anteriority; the photograph being an illogical conjunction between the here-now and the there-then.”

As part of research for both my 2015 exhibition “Movie Snaps: Cape Town Remembers Differently”¹⁰ and my film, “Movie Snaps” I re-enacted the taking of several Movie Snaps images, particularly those of my mother and father. I stood on the same spots in the city centre where these were originally taken – looking carefully to find the same manhole covers and street curbs, identifying the steps to the post office entrance – being sharply reminded that at the time of the original photographs, one set of steps was reserved for whites and the other for non-whites. This was a strange experience – the act of photographing decades-old experiences of my mother as a fourteen-year-old, and knowing her in a different way, time and space. My re-enactment was a reconstruction of another past in which I was implicated, which I, now as a willing photographer-participant, could direct, and in which I could engage, a tangible engagement with the idea of post-memory of Marianne Hirsch (1997, p. 22)¹¹. This too was playing with temporality, for not only were the shutter speeds different between the original moment and mine, but I found that in every sense, I was transforming the past. Time proceeded, slowed down and was re-arranged with different times, memories and experiences together, in an “illogical” way. I did not arrange the re-enactment in any order, they were not chronological and I found myself photographing scenes across months, moments and years as I realised that the story of oppression was not linear; it did not have a neatly defined beginning, middle and end. This was an altogether new experience; I was visibly performing and disrupting a narrative that started with the earliest image (1937). At the re-enactment, I touched these images and disturbed their dust, inhaling the musty smells that spoke to me simultaneously of Sunday lunches and home movies on Friday nights as well as the first image that drew me to photography, photojournalist Sam Nzima’s iconic black-and-white photograph of Hector Pieterse, which came to represent apartheid South Africa.

Nzima’s photograph that headlined across the globe was taken in 1976 when I was a disorientated nine-year old schoolgirl running from the tear gas and mayhem of protest at my school, Zonnebloem Girls Preparatory, located on the border of Walmer Estate and District Six. This unforgettable image shows a dying teenager, Hector Pieterse, being carried by a distraught and running fellow student, Mbuyisa Makhubu, on June 16 1976, the day when police opened fire on schoolchildren protesting

¹⁰ <http://www.cca.uct.ac.za/cca/projects/movie-snaps-cape-town-remembers-differently/> (accessed 28 March 2018).

¹¹ *Postmemory*, a concept developed by Marianne Hirsch is characterised as “The experience of those who grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can neither be understood nor recreated.”

being taught in Afrikaans, a language few of them understood, let alone spoke. I have always been haunted by this image and it resonates with me on many levels. It reminds me of my own fear as I ran in the street, eyes burning, alongside scores of other young children. I think about the photographer perhaps caught between wanting to take an image, and helping the dying teenager. It was from this day I now believe, that I became aware of just what it meant to be a child apparently cursed by inheriting a darker skin. This image however also brings a measure of solace, for as I begin to come to terms with the camera in Africa and trace its steps, my camera, the cardboard box and I continue the quest to obscure the multiple voids of life in post-apartheid South Africa.

The catastrophic nature of colonialism, slavery and apartheid demands therefore that it is re-seen as an ongoing trauma, unable to be attended to only by land restitution or being able to cast a vote. The implication of being deemed as not human are far-reaching, and while the impact of traumatic memories may be at first difficult to locate, this should not preclude measures that address the past. These reverberations illustrate the understanding of historical trauma as being located in the present. It highlights the difficulties as well as the urgency to develop tools to navigate this landscape that is simultaneously both new and old, familiar and foreign.

Christopher Pinney (2001), in thinking through performative embodiment within the everyday use of images has developed the term “corporetics” as “the sensory embrace of imaged, the bodily engagement that most people...have with artworks” Elizabeth Edwards (2005, p. 19) considers the primacy of the visual in Western notions of occularcentrism, saying that this focus has failed to consider “sensory and emotional impact of photographs as things that *matter*”. By touching Movie Snaps photographs, inscribing my traces on the well-thumbed, dusty and sticky-taped photographs, I was reminded that I was a part of a certain kind of life, a life forgotten, a life, that despite the domination of the law of racial oppression, clearly exhibited humanness, that matters in how history, ways of being and freedom after oppression can be understood. The photographs brought the realities of this past into sharp relief, as I walked around the city and its inhabitants torn, as Edgar Pieterse (2015) says, between a “nostalgic gloss for a past and an inability to grapple with the new.” My camera disrupted time, simultaneously fast-forwarding and slowing down decades, spaces and moments. As critical theorist and curator Anthony Bogues says in a lecture at the University of Cape Town (2011): “There is no moment that is not narratized; there is no moment in which there is not a symbolic order. There is no blank moment.”

In re-photographing these experiences, I began to think in new ways about the nature of photographs, the ways that they do not provide the answers as the historical documentation of the past. Through this process, the story of my history leapt out of academic chapters, danced its way past the archives of the academy and the museum, and confronted, unapologetically, a narrative shaped by others. Re-photographing these family images that held these moments of time and space, extend these through multiple and dynamic relationships, actions and processes. As Susan Sontag (1971, p. 166-7) writes:

“What photographs supplies is not only a record of the past but a way of dealing with the present... While old photographs fill out our mental image of the past, the photographs being taken now transmit what is present into a mental image, like the past. Cameras establish an inferential relation to the present (really known by its traces); provide an instantly retroactive view of experience”.

These banal collections in thousands of homes are invaluable as texts that speak in overt and covert ways of just what it means to have lives – and lived – as “black” people. They complicate the dichotomy between public and private and allow us to peer into traces of defiant agency. Movie Snaps’

subjects confront us with their own gaze as they rebuff and return any idea that their story – most of it untold – is unimportant, trivial or mundane. They foreground the importance of everyday. This archive entices the ordinary, it grapples with the familiar perhaps in an attempt to re-imagine or challenge the script of who the oppressed were *supposed* to be, as victims and as non-human subjects. Movie Snaps confronts the colonial and apartheid photographic archive and asks us to think about an archive of racial oppression in response. It is also deeply political. Within regimes of colonial and racial domination the domain of cultural production is where a certain contestation occurs, which itself is political. Culture becomes critical and central to life and the making of meaning. In systems of domination it becomes the subject of conflict as well as the space for contest (Hall, 1982).

Movie Snaps offers a chance to seize on the energy and excitement of contemporary contestations in South Africa and offers a new perspective according to understanding *how* the work of the imagination can offer new openings and ideas. These images respond to Frantz Fanon's (1952) call in "Black skin white masks" to engage the work of the imagination in navigating difference and imagining the human and ways of life (and their interrelatedness) in altogether different ways. In so doing, we begin the necessary work to address that which is articulated in a text of James Baldwin. In "Notes of a negro son" (1955, p. 29) he says:

"The man does not remember the hand that struck him, the darkness that frightened him, as a child, ...nevertheless, the hand and the darkness remain with him indivisible from himself forever."

For the millions of South Africans who were subjected to race-based oppressive practices, the realisation that a return to that which once was, is impossible; that notwithstanding any ameliorative exercise in terms of financial compensation, the futures of which they once dreamed remains elusive. It is a further injustice that these same South Africans and their children and grandchildren continue to pay the price for events that began in 1652 when a man called Jan van Riebeeck sailed into the bay Cape Town on a Dutch vessel and denied a future of infinite possibilities. The images of Movie Snaps suggest a settlement of an overdue debt so that that South Africa has a chance of to make good on the promise of freedom made in 1994.

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There is no disclosure.