Rethinking Railway Histories of the Transvaal:

Examining the Relationship between Infrastructure, Modernities and People, 1860s – 1960s

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Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to my siblings *Ababalwe, Siphiwokuhle, Abel and Boitumelo.*

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Abstract

Railway transportation has influenced many aspects of communities that have come in contact with the infrastructure and the space that surrounds it. In broad terms, it is undeniable that railways have played a significant role in shaping the political, economic, cultural and social configuration of the people in South Africa from mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century and beyond. The introduction of this mechanised mode of transportation catalysed western modernisation and industrialisation during the peak of the mineral revolution following the boom of the Kimberley and the Witwatersrand mining industries. Railway diplomacy was crucial in negotiating boundaries between the Cape Colony and the South African Republic and this process was largely facilitated and mediated via capital invested from European banks. The influence of modern capital in the emergence of this permanent infrastructure has skewed the bias of the archive towards a historical consciousness that mutes the narrative of the subaltern. This study intentionally occupies itself with examining the gaps and silences that exist of the encounters between black people and the railways. Railway transportation did more than just modernise the South African economy, it has also greatly influenced the 'modernisation' of the cultural and social identities of the people. One of the ways in which this modernity is realised is through mobility, displacement and settlement of black rural and urban Africans. Despite the efforts of the SAR&H to separate national political imperatives from the business operations and administration of the industry, it seemed this approach was applicable insofar as European/white lives were concerned. The inconsistencies are demonstrable through the casting of a blind eye to the ineffective economic model of low-fare African township train services. Tembisa is used as a case study in chapter four to explore the intersections of spatial planning and township railways during apartheid; a space imagined based on a railway line constructed during colonial South Africa. An important component of this research is also the histories of railway development in South Africa as a passage into pluri-versal modernity which places emphasis on the untold histories of the people who experienced the "*underside*" of modernity.

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List of Abbreviations

BHG – Berlinger Handelsgesellschaft

CBD – Central Business District

CGR – Cape Government Railways

CSAR – Central South African Railways

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GSWA – German South West Africa

NGR – Natal Government Railways

NZASM – Netherlands-South African Railways / Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaanse Spoorwegmaatschappij

OFS – Orange Free State

SADCC – Southern African Development Coordination Conference

SAR – South African Republic

SAR&H – South African Railways and Harbours

Chapter One

Introduction

The late nineteenth century witnessed the mineral revolution in South Africa. This period marked a change in the social organisation of the population particularly that of black Africans with the decline of the agrarian economy due to increased demand for migrant labour in the Kimberley and Witwatersrand mining industries. The Berlin Conference of 1884, which paralleled the South African mineral revolution, drew up Africa's political and commercial boundaries in the absence of indigenous African leaders, thereby outsourcing the European battle to African soil, particularly Anglo-German tensions.[1] Railway diplomacy was central to the economies of the interior republics (South African Republic and Orange Free State) and coastal colonies (Cape and Natal) as the currency of the gold fields in the Rand Mines received growing interest from international investors. The British, Germans and the Dutch played a significant role in the events building up to the formation of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910 and the Railway Act that was to inform the future commercial operations of the transport industry in South Africa. Union brought with it a much more centralised system of governance resulting in the dissolution of the British colonies of the Cape, and Natal; and the Boer Republics, the South African Republic, the Orange Free State.[2] Furthermore, a centralised railway administration was realised after the Union of South Africa Act which resulted in the absorption of the Cape Government Railways (CGR), Natal Government Railways (NGR) and Central South African Railways (CSAR) under the South African Railways and Harbours (SAR&H).

Railway transportation was crucial to infrastructure and industrial development in South Africa. Natal Colony was the forerunner of railway construction in the region opening the line for public use in 1860, closely followed by the Cape Colony whose first railway line was operational in 1861. In 1890, the first railway system in the Transvaal, the Rand Tram,

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[1] Van-Helten, J.J. 1978. 'German Capital, the Netherlands Railway Company and the Political Economy of the Transvaal 1886-1900.' *The Journal of African History.* Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 369.

[2] See, 'Thompson, L. 2001. *A History of South Africa.* Yale Nota Bene, Yale University Press. pp. 110', and 'Paul, Martin. 2014. 'Railways in South Africa: Historic Highlights, Strategic Evolution and Transformation 1845-2002.' *Spoornet.*

was built by the Netherlands South African Railway Company (NZASM)[3] funded by German banks with the intentions of monopolising the economies around the Rand goldfields. Initial contractors working on the first railway lines in the lowlands of Transvaal were Van Hattum,[4] a Dutch company. The first project piloted used outsourced labour from the Netherlands, however, the weather conditions and sickness were unfamiliar for the contractors leading NZASM to entrust local contractors and labourers with building the Rand Tram and other railway networks in the republic after cancelling the services of Van Hattum. Discomfort grew among the British as the Boers and Germans spearheaded the 'modernising' project of South Africa with the boom of the gold mining industry in the Witwatersrand, thus threatening both the political and economic standing of the British colonies within the region.[5] These tensions were displayed through the political chess game played by Paul Kruger of the South African Republic (SAR) and Cecil Rhodes of the Cape Colony using railway diplomacy during negotiations of border access into the SAR during the 1880s, the politics and economic effects will be discussed in greater detail in chapter two. The trajectory of railway ownership would shift focus after the Union Act of 1909 that united the Central South African Railways (CSAR), Cape Government Railways (CGR) and Natal Government Railways (NGR) under the state administration of South African Railways and Harbours (SAR&H).[6] Much of the historiography of the railways in the Transvaal has many gaps due to emphasis on the technical and bureaucratic analysis of the industry, with the omission of cultural and political narratives of the African people, particularly the voices of blackwomen and the poor.

Modernisation as a theoretical framework used to analyse different epochs within societies is highly contested, particularly around industrialisation. Arguments presented by scholars such as Walter Mignolo[7] suggest that "modernity" is entrenched in impersonal

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[3] De Jong, R.C. 1996. '" The Iron Road to the Sea": The Pretoria-Maputo Railway 1895-1995.'*Prteoriana, Journal of the Pretoria Historical Association: Old Pretoria Society.* No. 18, p. 6.

[4] Van Hattum & Co. was a Dutch Company that was hired to construct the first railway lines in the lowlands of the Transvaal. Although issues of "unhealthy" environments are cited as reasons behind the employment of non-South Africans in the first projects; it would seem that the outsourcing of labour from the Dutch company was rather politically and economically motivated by the concessions taken by Kruger's South Africa Republic and NZASM funders. See, Van-Helten, J.J. 'German Capital, the Netherlands Railway Company', de Jong, R.C. '" The Iron Road to the Sea"' and de Jong, R.C. 'NZASM Structures of the Rand Tram and the Southern Line.' *Transvaal Provincial Museum Services.*

[5] Van-Helten, J.J. 'German Capital', p 373 – 375.

[6] Paul, M. 'Railways in South Africa", pp. i & 3.

[7] Mignolo, W. 2007. 'Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-coloniality.' *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 449-514.

institutions that are oilers of the capitalist machine. The literature review will discuss the concept of modernity in detail since the concept itself is central to the study. Technological advancements that accompanied the mineral revolution pioneered the industrialisation of the South African economy creating epicentres located in burgeoning cities such as Johannesburg.[8] Railways were catalysts in the realisation of "modernity" in South Africa as industries such as electrification, tourism and marketing were foregrounded upon railway infrastructure existence and operations. Likewise, railways were central to exporting industrial development and along with it, "modernity" to the coastal nodes and rural hinterland. The movement of people and goods formed the core of this industry.

The relationship between government-owned railways and the mining corporations was characterised by vicissitudes as priorities between the two tended to clash.[9] The SAR&H occupied a peculiar position as a state entity that was simultaneously sensitive to the economic sector.[10] Oftentimes, the priorities of the segregationist as well as apartheid government frequently clashed with those of the mining, railway and industrial sectors. The government prioritised segregation while the mining industry as well as the railway industry was more fixated on the profit margins. Unlike the Chamber of Mines, railway administrations often found themselves in a catch 22 regarding their commercial interests and investments as well as the social engineering of the national identity by the government. However, this is not to disqualify the mutual benefit enjoyed by the private corporations based on national legislation where convenient. The dawn of apartheid in 1948 saw the intensification of the already existing segregationist laws that seeped through every aspect of South African society, including urban spatial planning and township railways. Transportation and settlement was an important project after the South African War; throughout the various political dispensations leading to the apartheid regime the movement of black Africans was vigorously monitored and controlled in urban spaces, consequently resulting in the formal creation of townships. It is worth noting that in regions such as the Cape and Port Elizabeth, railway branches connecting the townships and

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[8] Feinstein, C. H. 2005. *An Economic History of South Africa: Conquest, Discrimination and Development.* Cambridge University Press, p. 105.

[9] Pirie, G. 1993. 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance.' *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 714 – 715.

[10] Mission of SAR&H, "*The railways, ports and Harbours of the Union shall be administered on business principles; due regard be given to agricultural and industrial development within the Union and promotion, by means of cheap transport, of the settlement of an agricultural and industrial population in the inland proportions*".

industrial centres were created as early as 1902, most privately-owned and smaller in scale. It was only in 1920 that railways across South Africa were amalgamated and declared as parastatals; through this outcome unfolded further entrenchment of the racial division of commuters through railway policy and legislation that perpetuated inequality.[11]

A network of railway stations scattered across the southern African region were used to funnel black Africans into the Rand mines through coercion and/or other means. Migrant labour movement and demand grew in the Rand mines following the advent of deep digging. Five years after the completion of the Rand Tram in 1890, lines expanded, reaching into Natal and the Cape Colony by 1895; this was also done as a means to tap into the labour reservoirs that existed along the way, mostly from rural homelands.[12] Railway expansion into the British territories from the Republic or vice versa was facilitated through the Sivewright Agreement that enabled the construction of the Southern Line into the Transvaal borders. Before the South African War, the contest of which line will reach the coastal borders first between the Southern Line and Eastern Line was high as both the economies of the SAR and the Cape had much to gain depending on which direction the traffic of goods flowed from the Rand mines. The race to the harbours was won by the Cape Colony through the completion of the Southern Line linking the Transvaal to the Cape harbours before the Eastern Line reached the Delagoa Bay, the influence of 'modern' capital investment from Europe was instrumental throughout the process for both main lines. Inasmuch as these main lines were made for transportation of freight, access to labour later evolved these main lines to also establish a migrant labour recruitment syndicate that was essential for the development of both the mining and railway industries. Railway administrations benefitted from the various agreements made with mining corporations on railway ganging that worked on fixed fares for groups of black Africans recruited to work either for the railways or in the gold mines. The mining corporations benefitted through the fixed fares for the labourers they needed to fuel the outputs from their own industry.[13]

Population numbers in the mining areas grew as the demand for labour increased; by 1940 approximately 380,000 black Africans were hired to work in the Rand mines.[14] This

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[11] Pirie, G.H. 1987. 'African Township Railways and the South African State, 1902-1963.' *Journal of Historical Geography.* Vol. 13, No. 3, p. 283.

[12] Pirie, G. 'Railways and Labour Migration', p. 716.

[13] Pirie, 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines' pp. 723.

[14] Feinstein, C. H. *An Economic History of South Africa,* p. 107.

figure is a fraction of the number of black Africans who migrated into Johannesburg leading to a housing crisis by the mid-twentieth century. The population growth catalysed the process of urbanisation in the Transvaal. Racial segregation seeped into the legal framework of the country as laws were promulgated that enforced the Othering of many racial groups falling outside the racial categorisation of being white/European, these laws include the Natives Land Act 1913, the Group Areas Act no.41 of 1950[15] and Native Resettlement Act No.19 of 1954.[16] These Acts were used to justify the uneconomic construction of townships and rail transportation in remote and undesirable regions on the outskirts of the city or industrial zones[17] with the racial zoning premised on the sanitation syndrome and the civilising project of Europeans to the world of the Other. Rabothata describes the law and the demolishing of multiracial suburbs as "[v]ictims of the 'We-group-you-there-fools-and-animals-one-side-and-people-this-way-please'Act", demonstrating the harsh realities and effects of the law on the uprooted.[18] The newly formed and overtly segregationist settlement order was to be connected by railways (which could 'easily be managed') or by a single road that connected the townships to centres traversing through open plains of land that acted as buffers, which historically were symptomatic of the 'sanitation syndrome'. Disease and illnesses became a tool used by the various governments to further segregate black Africans away from 'white' urban spaces using the myth that black Africans are carriers of diseases, this phenomenon was coined by Maynard Swanson as the 'sanitation syndrome'.[19] The discrimination of commuters according to racism was multi-layered with black Africans at the bottom of the tier. In Natal the Indians formed part of the group that discriminated against using the same carriages as black Africans and in the Cape the Coloured community also shared similar sentiments and behaviours. The colonies tended to have a more liberal political dispensation whereas the republics out-rightly enforced

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[15] Group Areas Act No. 41 of 1950, section 26, "Restriction on residence of coloured persons on certain proclaimed land" access online https://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za>inv_pdf.

[16] Native Resettlement Act of 1954, "To provide for the removal of natives from areas in the magisterial district of Johannesburg or any adjoining magisterial district and their settlement elsewhere, and for that purpose to establish a board and to define its functions; and to provide for the incidental matters" access online https://www.sahistory.org.za/archives/natives-settlement-act,-act-no-19-of-1954.

[17] Parnell, S. 1988. 'Land Acquisition and the Changing Residential Face of Johannesburg, 1930 – 1955.' *The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)*. Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 307 – 314.

[18] Pirie, G. H. & Hart, D. M. 1988. 'State and Black Townships in the Republic of South Africa: An Experiential Perspective.' *African Urban Quarterly,* p. 31.

[19] Swanson, M. 1977. 'The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and the Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900 – 1909.' *Journal of African History.* Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 387.

segregationist laws and social engineering of the railways from inception with little consideration or differentiation of the subalterns.

Segregation was not pervasive in the transportation industry alone; the urban spatial planning of many cities was informed by segregation and racial discrimination. Townships mushroomed on the outskirts of mining regions in Gauteng such as the Witwatersrand and Elandsfontein (known now as Germiston); some of these townships were built near already existing main lines requiring short distance extensions while others were more remote and required the laying of new infrastructure connecting these distant regions with labour zones. Despite the on-going relationship between municipalities and railway administrations regarding the building of townships and the constructions and extensions of railways into these resettlement areas, this collaboration was not without its own internal challenges. Tembisa can be termed as a model township because its establishment was the deliberate product of the Group Areas Act 1950; the resettlement zone was constructed along an existing main line, the Southern Line connecting via the Kaalfontein station. The township's imagining and name was inspired by the railway infrastructure of the section of the Southern Line from Elandsfontein to Pretoria. It is the second largest township in Gauteng and will be used as a case study in chapter 4 to examine the influence of railway infrastructure on the spatial planning and population growth of Tembisa as a feeder of labour to the surrounding industries and surburbs. Unlike the townships in the south, Tembisa is unique in that it is a resettlement area that is not far removed from the labour zones and the travel along the Southern Line (along the Elandsfontein-Pretoria network) was one of the ways used to attract resettlement of many black families in the area.

With an area of 42,800sq.km and population of approximately 463,106[20] recorded in 2011, the township has four railway stations namely, *Tembisa*, *Limindlela*, *Leralla* and *Oakmoor*. It is located in the industrial hub of Gauteng and is linked to the Germiston region, which was formerly popular for its rich gold mining industry[21] and its coal mining that fuelled the goldfields.[22] It was conceived in 1957 after the promulgation of the Group Areas Act of 1950, a policy which displaced black Africans from areas said to be reserved for white-only occupation, suburbs such as Edenvale, Kempton Park and Germiston amongst many other

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[20] Accessed online https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=4286&id=11262.

[21] Pirie, G. H. 'Railways and Labour Migration in the Rand Mines,' p. 716.

[22] Feinstein, C. H. *An Economic History of South Africa,* p. 107.

smaller suburbs in the region. Little has been written about railways in Tembisa and how the township came into existence because of the Southern Line. Again the available literature tends to focus less on the narrative of the people and focuses instead on the histories of the railway companies or the mining industry.

This study will critically engage the histories of black Africans that laboured towards the construction of railways in the Transvaal and the evolution of the infrastructure into a space for black African commuters located in the townships thus highlighting the agency and participation of black Africans in the 'modernising' of the country. The role and influence of 'modern' capital from European banks will be examined together with its impact on the conceptualisation of a modern society that excluded all racial groups that were not classified as white.

This study considers the historical context of the railway histories in South Africa spanning from the colonial period of the 1880s, through to the earlier decades of apartheid from 1948 - 1960s. Particular attention will be given to Tembisa Township because it is located along a branch line that does not receive as much scholarly attention despite its large population and infrastructure investment. The Southern Line was constructed during the colonial period but played a significant role in the spatial planning and social engineering of segregationist and apartheid South Africa. The SAR&H boasted a strong marketing strategy to attract travel and tourism in South Africa; however, the representation in the marketing was biased towards Europeans/white South Africans and frequently excluded the representation of non-European/black South Africans.[23] The nature of such an archive is incomplete and locates non-Europeans/blacks as ahistorical Beings. This creates an incomplete narrative that negates the participation of sub-subaltern groups such as blackwomen[24] and what is contemporarily termed as non-binary peoples in the sculpting of "modernity". Histories of technology and infrastructure development tend to focus extensively on institutions (financial, political, and professional) and mute the cultural and social changes encountered by ordinary people as a

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[23] See images by Hilton Teper's in '*The Publicity and Travel Department of the South African Railways and Harbours'*. Accessed in https://www.flickr.com/photos/hilton-t/collections/72157621916648803.

[24] The term "Blackwoman/blackwoman" is adopted from Pumla D. Gqola's body of work. In literature, "Black/black" in Black woman is characterised as the embodiment of all races and classes subjugated under colonial and apartheid rule (inclusive of Latin Americans, Indians, 'Coloureds', Asians and etc.), which in this context can be understood as "white" rule. According to Gqola, "Blackwoman/blackwoman" refers specifically to the context and struggles of the black African woman. It is within this definition that the term will be used in this research.

result of industrialisation, particularly within railway histories. The study will attempt to locate and position the subaltern Beings within the history of the railways. Similarly, there will be an engagement with the multifaceted subalterneity of blackwomen within these histories, as the infrastructure itself becomes a location for gendered urban spaces. Theory and empiricism will be used congruently to analyse and fill in the gaps/silences of the archive and available data.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to trace the railway histories in South Africa and analyse the role of this infrastructure development on the lives of South Africans and to examine the influence of the railways in moulding the political, economic, social and spatial histories of the Transvaal by investigating the Eastern and Southern Line. With this focus in mind, the current research aims to demystify the misrepresentation of the histories of black Africans and their interactions with industrialisation, gendered spaces and modernity.[25]

Specific Objectives

- Investigate how railways shaped the social, political and economic lives of black Africans, following the trail from the migrant labour system through to railway transport in townships;

- Examine the relationship between railway administrations, government municipalities and law in regulating transport competition;

- Analyse the relationship between "modern[26]" spaces and their relation to the black human condition in urban spaces;

- Explore the interaction between the people of Tembisa and the railway infrastructure;

- Examine the role of modern capital from European banks during the emergence of railway construction in the nineteenth century.

Rationale

The histories of technological infrastructure, industrialisation and modernity tend to isolate and neglect the narrative of the oppressed majority in South Africa. This study seeks to interrogate the fundamental principles of written histories and historiography rooted in Eurocentrism, in

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[25] Tonkiss, F. 2005. *Space, the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Forms.* Polity Press, p. 95.
[26] The concept of "modern" and "modernity" will be engaged and explored within this research in its plural manifestations.

an effort to unmute marginalised narratives. This study uses railway transport as the literal vehicle for foregrounding marginalised historical narratives of black African lived experiences of, and engagement with European technological modernity. Ashish Nandy argues that 'history'[27] as a product of European modernity negates the plurality of the past and excludes many from historical consciousness.[28] This research is part of many interventions geared towards the reinsertion of 'ahistorical' groups into documented histories wherein the majority of black South Africans are located. Admittedly, there have been efforts targeted at addressing the historiographical gaps that exist in South African history; however, most of these interventions focus on political activities characterised by protest, suppression, class and racialism overlooking the daily encounters of many black Africans with space, infrastructure and each other within these spaces and infrastructure. Furthermore, revisionist histories reinforce the silencing of blackwomen's participation in urban spaces, economies and technological advancements. Societal movements are non-linear, leading to insufficient and incomplete analysis of Eurocentric modernity and the principle of 'history' in non-European spaces.[29] This study aims to contribute towards the reconceptualization of history and the general public perception of the country's past and its contemporary legacies. Thus, extending influence to policies relating to the zonal spacing of infrastructure and human settlements.

Literature Review

Scholarly conceptualisations of modernity and history are peppered with polemics. In recent decades there has been a growth in emerging literature from 'ahistorical' people, typically referred to as 'Other'. It is through schools of thought and disciplines and theoretical approaches such as history, decolonisation, post-coloniality, subalternity, African literature, African philosophy, development studies, and others, that the 'ahistorical' find expression in economic and epistemological domains. The universalising of whiteness and Eurocentrism is contested in favour of plural epistemologies/pluri-versalism. This literature review will engage the limitations of 'history' in documenting marginalisation and attempted erasures of the past, in particular that of ahistorical peoples. Furthermore, it will examine personal and impersonal spaces in understanding the marginalised narratives of the relationship between the railways

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[27] Nandy argues that history as an understanding of the past is incomplete and is not representative of marginalised groups because it excludes many marginalised peoples narratives from the archives and historical memory.
[28] Nandy, A. 1998. 'History's Forgotten Doubles' in Pomper, P; Elphick, R.H. & Vann, R. T. (eds.) *World History: Ideologies, Structures, and Identities.* Blackwell Publishers, Wesleyan University, p. 159.
[29] Ibid., p. 160.

and black African people in railway histories. This literature review will explore the alternatives to theories of modernity, historicisation and cultures in railway transportation.

Connecting People and Industries

The interdependent relationship between people, industry and transport is fascinating and complex. It creates within itself various dimensions of interaction and interception of social, political and economic spaces. South African railways have a rich history moored in bureaucracies between the state and the mining corporations, the resistance movements against apartheid and the interdependent relationship within countries and industry in the southern African region, among many other things. Gordon Pirie has conducted prolific research that investigates and discusses the abovementioned topics, as has Paul Martin in tracking the history of Spoornet. This section will engage the content of four of Pirie's academic papers and the research report by Martin on Spoornet and investigate the formation of the link between the people and industry, and how the mineral revolution catalysed change in the social fabric of South African society.

Railways in South Africa did not mushroom at the discovery of minerals in South Africa. For decades railways had existed, smaller in scale, and with direct functionality of transporting goods between the coastal ports and the "white" agricultural inlands.[30] Historic highlights as identified by Martin stretch into the mid-nineteenth century when the Cape Town Railways and Dock Company formed in 1853 and the formation of the Natal Railway Company in 1859. As early as the 1820s there was an established trail of trans-border railways intercepting countries neighbouring South Africa; a line connecting Komatipoort and the Portuguese borders was opened in July 1891 and it was only in October 1894 that the Delagoa Bay railway line reached into the heart of Pretoria.[31] These links were largely influenced by the spatial structuring of colonialism and the outcomes of European expansionism and the Berlin Conference.[32] Although this study does not extend its research into the 1980s, it is important to note that the railway networks established by South Africa during the colonial period influenced some of the political resistance movements from the region's neighbouring

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[30] Pirie, G. 1993. 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance.' *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Vol. 19, No. 4, p. 713 – 714.

[31] Martin, P. 2004. 'Addendum A - Historic Highlights.' *Transnet Heritage Foundation,* p. 1.

[32] Pirie, G. H. 1991. 'Reorienting and Restructuring Transportation in Southern Africa.' *Geografie.* Vol. 82, No. 5, p. 345.

countries after political independence from colonisation. During the 1980s, countries in southern Africa boycotted and rerouted their line of trade from apartheid South Africa with the assistance of the United Nations and the formation of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), consisting of Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.[33] The link between the railway histories of the two periods, colonial and apartheid South Africa, is the politicisation of the railway infrastructure and its direct impact on multiple industries connected to trade.

As mentioned earlier, the presence of railway networks in South Africa predated 1890. However, it was the mining industry that catapulted the expansion of the railways in South Africa as demand grew for both goods and labour transportation inland from the coastal regions. The track for the first railway built for the Rand mines extended from Johannesburg to Boksburg and later extended to Krugersdorp and Springs on 17 March 1890.[34] The Pretoria spur only became effective for transportation of labour after the establishment of the link to Pietersburg in 1896. Coastal regions of the country were connected through the Cape line which ran across the Orange Free State and the Eastern Cape in 1892. For Transvaal and Natal, the connection was completed in 1895 after the completion of the Southern Line and the negotiations of the Sivewright Agreement that delayed the cross border railway network.[35] All these areas, with the exception of the Orange Free State, were sources of labour reserves. Strategically, these stations were connected to prime agricultural, industrial and commercial nodes but none located near settlement areas occupied by black Africans be it in the countryside or within the urban areas. International demand and popularity of the Gold standard led to the development and growth of the mining industries in the Rand. Therefore by the 1920s, through railway ganging coordination, *tens* of thousands of miners were recruited and railed into the Rand mines so as to increase the output levels from the labour intensive deep digging process.[36] Despite this influx of migrant labour to the towns black African labourers occupied the urban space temporarily and this control of mobility and settlement was monitored and enforced by the government using the Pass Laws and racial zoning for residential settlement. Transportation was central in the mobility of miners from the homelands into the urban areas as well as from their temporary domicile to their place of work. Government intervention was heavy handed

[33] Ibid., p. 346.
[34] Martin, P. 'Addendum A - Historic Highlights', p. 1.
[35] Pirie, G. 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines', p. 716.
[36] Ibid., p. 717.

in favour of railway transportation for both long and short distance commuting at the expense of other modes of transportation which were suffocated through policies and laws in protection of railways. Industrialists and business investors who utilised the railway services as part of their operations were negatively affected by high taxation as a means to contribute towards the cross-subsidisation accorded to the railway administrations to support the economic fallbacks from the agricultural industry.[37]

Tensions between railways and the mining industry were further complicated by the railway administrations which facilitated the process of internal and external recruitment of migrant labourers. Before the Union of South Africa, in 1910, there were different railway administrations that operated independently. Tariffs, schedules, capacity and frequency were not uniform due to lack of co-ordination of the railway policies influenced by national operators in South Africa, Mozambique, Bechuanaland and the Rhodesias. The process towards an agreement for railway services required the consultation of NZASM, the Pretoria and Pietersburg Railway Company, the Free State Railway Company, the NGR, the CGR and after the South African War, the CSAR. These segmented railway administrations affected the recruitment pattern until 1910 when all were merged into SAR&H.[38]

The maladministration of the railways and their precarious relationship with the mining industries may have been mitigated with the emergence of SAR&H; however, it was the beginning of crowd control for many commuters along racial categorisations. The pace of urbanisation paralleled the increase in segregationist laws in the Transvaal. Influx of people influenced by prospects of economic emancipation led to the cosmopolitanisation of the Transvaal. Railways were the site for both realising and resisting the "South African dream".

During the 1920s there were protests resisting racial segregation on trains; this followed a major strike in 1914 by employees of the SAR&H.[39] Complaints focused blame on the 1916 Act and 1918 railway regulations. Both Acts were in response to the Railway Act of 1910 that emphasised the commercial interests of the SAR&H over the politics which were rather turbulent towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth. The 1916 and 1918 Railway Act and Regulations reinserted the authority of the General

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[37] Martin, P. 2004. 'Railways in South Africa: Historic Highlights, Strategic Evolution and Transformation 1845-2002.' *Spoornet,* 3 – 5.
[38] Ibid., p, 722.
[39] Martin, P. 'Addendum A', p. 1.

Manager appointed by the government above that of the railway committee appointed after the Union;[40] this legislative alteration undermined the commercial outcomes of the industry due to authoritative government meddling for segregationist railway commuting. The overriding cry was for better treatment of black passengers on trains and was supported by varied organisations such as the Johannesburg Joint Council of Africans and Europeans against SAR&H.[41] Conflict continued, and an incident was recorded of a violent scenario between black passengers and white employees of SAR&H. In 1941 twenty-seven black people were assaulted by SAR&H staff members in trains in the Witwatersrand area. Only two convictions were made. In 1943, an African was beaten and thrown out of a moving train for having an incorrect ticket by two ticket examiners who were fined 25pounds or three months' imprisonment with hard labour.[42] These racial clashes intensified as the power of the apartheid government grew stronger in reach and influence, resulting in the project of erecting informal settlements such as Tembisa through the Group Areas Act of 1950, further deepening inequality based on racialism. The maltreatment of black African commuters and other racially discriminated groups was tactically dealt with by the SAR&H administration. Inasmuch as there was little concern for the subaltern and their experience with the space, the use of the infrastructure formed part of the bigger project used to attract and maintain residential segregation and resettlement in remote townships.

These segregationist laws were not meekly received by the oppressed majority, continuously the railway space was contested either through protest or memoranda.[43] As the decades lapsed the intensity of the resistance movements grew and the challenge to apartheid rule became more pronounced. Although railway apartheid was at its zenith during the 1960s and early 1970s, the political landscape of South Africa challenged this process through a series of protests from trade unions, political parties and commuters. By 1988 there was complete abolition of the segregationist policies in railways.[44] However, prior to this historic moment, the Separate Amenities Act No. 49 of 1953 had legalised the separation of facilities for blacks

[40] Surdut, B. 1977. 'South African Airways: State – or Public Enterprise?' MA Thesis submitted at the University of Cape Town, pp. 70.

[41] Pirie, G. H. 1992. 'Rolling Segregation into Apartheid: South African Railways, 1948-53.' *Journal of Contemporary History.* Vol. 27, p. 673.

[42] Ibid., p. 674.

[43] Pirie, G. 'African Township Railways and the South African State', p. 286.

[44] Pirie, G. 1989/90. 'Dismantling Railway Apartheid in South Africa', p. 181.

and whites.[45] Black facilities were scarce if available at all in some trains, especially for long distance rail travel. This represented a highly-skewed approach to the realities of the labour force within the metropoles of South Africa. Complaints against SAR&H by citizens were tabled in front of parliament resulting in the constant politicisation of the railway industry.[46] The presence and enforcement of segregationist laws in the railways was largely influenced by the social engineering administered by the apartheid government and had long lasting ramifications for the railway industry.

The General Manager of SAR&H did approach the Minister of Transport in 1974 to highlight the challenges and demands forwarded by the Trade Union Council of South Africa because of apartheid in railways. Concerns of the government were more rooted in the maintenance of apartheid laws as the Minister of Transport was insisting on upholding racial segregation by rationalising it as the protection of whites from being overrun.[47] Pressure from anti-segregationist organisations was applied on the state in protest of the insistence of segregationist regulations on the railways; the government lost moral ground when stories of the separation of schoolchildren from the same school were publicised.[48] What is evident is that the railways were a site of charged political activity, be it associated with the economy or sociality. The shift and change of labour and settlement demands in South Africa are reflected in the mode and operations of the railways. What is understood as a shaper of modernity and society finds itself constantly influenced by the dynamics of political and social engineering and the movements of people and goods.

While the examination of railways extends beyond just physical infrastructure in the body of work written by Pirie and Martin, there is still little or no focus on the relationship of the railways and black communities located in townships. Tembisa is a product of displacement and segregation; additionally, the region has contributed to the growth of the East Rand industrial sector by providing cheap labour. While it is challenging to access primary and secondary texts/sources relating to the people and railways in Tembisa, the literature written on activities relating to the railways in urban South African communities does create an

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[45] Ibid., p. 183.
[46] Martin, P. 'Railways in South Africa', p. 8.
[47] Ibid., p. 184.
[48] Ibid., p. 189.

opportunity worth exploring for this particular study on a people whose histories have been placed at the extreme ends of peripheralisation.

Modernity, Alternative Modernity and Alternatives to Modernity

Modernity is a term loosely associated with progress, the Enlightenment and 'civilising' spaces, worlds and societies beyond Europe, especially those that today constitute the Global South, by the West. These characteristics are associated with the development of science, 'impersonal' bureaucracies, individual psycho-social rationality, liberal state institutions and economies, secularised religion, art and advancements in technology in Europe. Societies imagined along such lines tend to create a myth of homogeneity and blur the class and racial differences present in society. Additionally, this definition excludes the 'uglier' realities that made Western modernity possible, such as the expendability of human life of those considered less 'rational beings'[49] and the lack of a space of expression for women and the queer. Railway transportation is oftentimes associated with modernity due to its heavy presence in the histories of technological and scientific developments. Below is an excerpt describing modernity as a process of reflection of Western aesthetics in urbanised life by Marshall Berman. [50]

> There is a mode of vital experience – experience of space and time, of self and others, of life's possibilities and perils – that is shared by men and women all over the world today. I will call this body of experience 'modernity'. To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are. Modern environments and experiences cut across all boundaries of geography and ethnicity, of class and nationality. (Berman, 1983, p.1)

Berman is clear in his description on the lived experience and sociality of cities; what he omits in his reflections is the role of capitalism in creating and imagining urbanisation. His argument illustrates the binary of the urban and the 'traditional' by examining these spaces using Rousseau's "problem of the self".[51] It is relevant that we engage with the conceptualisation of modernity from a western thinker because of its direct influence on the modernising aspirations

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[49] Ibid., p. 41.

[50] Excerpt from, Savage, M & Warde, A. 1993. *Urban Sociology, Capitalism and Modernity.* p. 3.

[51] See, Berman, M. 1988. *All that is Solid Melts into Thin Air: The Experience of Modernity.* Penguin Books. & Berman, M. 2009. *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society.* Verso: London.

of Cecil Rhodes and Paul Kruger using the railways and how later Sir William Hoy, General Manager of SAR&H, moulded the narrative of rail travel using landscape to juxtapose the urban to the rural life. Colonial South Africa was certain of its political independence from Europe and forged relations based on alliances. However, it placed its gaze of civilisation and modernity on Europe thus influencing the trajectory of cultures of transport in the region. The experience of modernity in urban spaces did not unfold as fluidly in colonial South Africa as described by Berman. This was mainly because the differentiation of the modern and the traditional Being was not based on the individual's own encounter with each space but rather on the racial divide that existed within the racially stratified society. The white European was always associated and linked with the modern while other racial groupings could either assimilate towards modernity or remain traditional. Technology and infrastructural development being the measurement used to access the proximity to modernity of an Other.

Lynn Thomas points out the limitations of this binary logic by identifying the premise of modernity's "sudden rupture and lack of continuity" as adopted by the colonial and apartheid government. The lack of continuities in the discourse of modernity results in the deliberate exclusion of the Other. African history as a subfield has explored in great lengths the tug of war between the "modern/new" versus "tradition" using theories of modernity and development.[52] While many may argue using a different premise, the commonality remains in the imagining of modernity as a plural, ambivalent and multifaceted concept.[53] Within railway histories in South Africa the domain that utilised this binary was the tourism industry of the SAR&H which often produced and disseminated postcards that showed the existence of the traditional and modern existing in the same time and space. Oftentimes, these postcards were orchestrated to attract the European gaze and tourist. For Walter Mignolo, Berman's reflection is invalid because it negates the nuances of the global community and further ignores the ramifications of coloniality which accompanies modernity. He, Mignolo, describes it as the

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[52] See, Masilela, N. 1996. 'The "Black Atlantic" and African Modernity in South Africa.' *Research in Africa.* Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 88 – 96; Atwell, D. 2005. *Rewriting Modernity: Studies in Black South African Literary History.* Ohio University Press and University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Press; Robinson, J. 2006. *Ordinary Cities: Between Modernity and Development.* Routledge, Francis and Taylor; Thomas, L. 2006. 'The Modern Girl and Racial Respectability in 1930s South Africa.' *The Journal of African History.* Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 461 – 490; Wright, L. 2010. 'The Third World Express: Trains and "Revolution" in Southern African Poetry.' *Literator.* Vol. 31, No. 1, pp. 1 – 18 and Matunhu, J. 2011. 'A Critique of Modernisation and Dependency Theories in Africa: Critical Assessment.' *African Journal of History and Culture.* Vol. 3, No. 5, pp. 65 – 72.

[53] Thomas, M. L. 2011. 'Modernity's Failings, Political Claims, and Intermediate Concepts.' *American Historical Review.*

'darker side' in his text 'Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity' which will be discussed later in this section. In the context of this study, the ramifications affecting railway histories during the nineteenth and early twentieth century were the harsh and oppressive manner in which black African communities were treated during the process of constructing the iron horse. Some of these include the exploitative unskilled labour regulations and displacement of people either through migration or due to the forceful removal of communities to make space for the infrastructure.

Modernity as a concept has morphed in form over many periods fitting the mould of economies that are controlled by the West. Its rhetoric has transformed with the system. Railways in South Africa would have not been in existence without the capital investment from European banks. Therefore, the narrative of railway histories is consistently shaped by the views of the investor.[54] Mignolo argues that over the centuries, it has taken shape in different phases[55] that consistently brand themselves with the coat of "newness". [56] He states that the current phase of modernity is drenched in coloniality which configured the current capitalist economy. He further presents two scenarios of modernity as described by the historian of religion, Karen Armstrong.

According to Mignolo, Armstrong identifies two salient points of modernity, the economy and epistemology. He further adds that for Armstrong, the radical transformation of the economy of Europe and America is rooted in the reinvestment of surplus to increase production. For South Africa in the nineteenth century, investment from European capital that was ill-gotten through the process of colonisation facilitated the economic change fuelled by the growing mining industry and the necessity for mechanised transportation. The process allowing radical economic transformation to continually feed itself is made possible through colonialism.[57] On paper, such an economy seems desirable; however, what is hidden is the cheap labour and slavery that helped build capitalism. These were arguments consistent with those of C.L.R. James and W.E.B. Du Bois who argued that the underdevelopment of Africa

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[54] Van-Helten, J. J. 1978. 'German Capital, the Netherlands Railway Company and the Political Economy of the Transvaal 1886 – 1900.' *The Journal of African History,* Vol. 19, No. 3.

[55] The phases are broken down by Mignolo as follows: "As salvation via the Spanish and Portuguese; newness and progress as spearheaded by the Enlightenment and development as observed through the United States and the neo-liberal global economy". Mignolo's analyses of the different phases focuses on vertical and not horizontal power.

[56] Mignolo, W. 'Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity', p. 45.

[57] Ibid., p. 41.

was engineered by the West[58] - a critique introduced by Marxist and Feminist scholars also enhanced the discussion around capital, modernity and gendered spaces in the 1960s and 1970s. The expendability of human life is integral in the maintenance of the capitalist machinery. Tembisa, established during the apartheid period, emerged as a strategic region where the majority of black Africans would feed the East Rand industrial sector with cheap labour, located close to the factories and mines and adequately spaced away from surrounding suburbs. Much of the employment available for the residents of Tembisa was highly exploitative and contributed little to bridging the inequality gap between the black and white peoples, a design consistent with the aims of a segregationist nation as imagined by the colonial government and thoroughly implemented during apartheid. This phenomenon was not unique to Tembisa only but was perverse in all the townships that were planned for black African people occupation/settlement.

Epistemologically, the scientific revolution is recognised as having taken possibly the greatest stride towards the advancement of humankind having control over the environment and machinery such as the railways. This is a fair observation made by Armstrong but it undermines the contributions made prior to this period towards the sciences by other civilisations. Debates around globalisation argue this point in depth and follow the path of global interactions preceding European expansionism. The European Renaissance (science/knowledge and art/meaning) owes some of its founding principles to the astronomical and mathematical sciences coming from the East, Middle East and Africa. Mignolo acknowledges the points made by Armstrong and expands these by highlighting that coloniality made modernity by naturalising racial rankings of human beings through monopoly of knowledge (be it borrowed or stolen from other societies).[59] When tracing the histories of railway and mining industries the naturalisation of hierarchical employment rankings is clearly observable with white Europeans occupying the positions of skilled labour while black Africans always occupied positions within unskilled labour.[60] Colonial South Africa demonstrated the perverse nature of the logic of coloniality through the consistency of

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[58] Thomas, L. 'Modernity's Failings', p. 728.
[59] Mignolo, W. 'Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity', p. 41.
[60] See, Pirie, G. 'Railway Ganging in southern Africa, c. 199-37'. *The Journal of Transport History*. Pg. 64 - 76; Heydenrych, D. H. 1986. 'Indian Railway Labour in Natal, 1876 – 1895: The Biggest Indian Work Force in the Colony.' *Historia*. Vol. 31, No. 3 and Purkis, A. J. 1978. 'The Politics, Capital and Labour of Railway-Building in the Cape Colony, 1870 – 1885.' PhD Thesis, University of Oxford.

segregationist and oppressive governance of other non-European racial groups despite the diplomatic tensions existing between the colonies and republics.

Critical to coloniality is the conquering of space and time; Mignolo identifies epistemological dominance and the global capitalist economy as tools used by coloniality to achieve hegemony over many spaces.[61] One of the ways in which the apartheid government sought to modernise South Africa was by means of statistical analysis and implementation of strict policies of surveillance of 'non-white' South Africans. Urban spaces were controlled and monitored using modernising tools which were characteristic of a 'modern' state whose main priorities were centred on population control.[62] Deborah Posel argues that the imaginings of modernity for the apartheid government were anchored in controlling the non-white, particularly black African, population in the economic, political and urban spaces; to arrive at this conclusion Posel uses Foucault's definition of 'governmentality'. She also expands its definition using terms like 'state craft'.[63] Furthermore, Posel articulates that despite the claim that the concept 'modern' has historical interconnectedness the manner in which 'modernity' unfolds is particular to set processes as opposed to condition.[64] Using the methodology of centralised power as a conceptualisation of governance, the apartheid government viewed 'modern' South Africa as "large, powerful and centrally coordinated to keep each 'race' in its 'proper' place, economically, politically and socially".[65] The argument for a conquest of space and time can be tracked using the cases of emerging black townships during the twentieth century.

Black urban townships, as conquered in time (origin and history, education/knowledge) and space (railway/geo-politics) can be understood in the following ways. The majority of the population is comprised of below low income earners subjected to public school education and reliant on public services. The public sector is yet to transform from its colonial administration and the education content is predominantly Eurocentric. Township transportation is dominated by the railways, which are government-owned, because

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[61] Mignolo, W. 'Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity', p. 46.
[62] Posel, D. 1996. 'Modernity and Measurement: Further Thoughts on the Apartheid State.' Seminar paper presented in the Richard Ward Building Seventh Floor, Seminar Room 7003. University of the Witwatersrand, Institute for Advanced Social Research.
[63] Ibid., p. 13.
[64] Ibid., p. 5.
[65] Ibid., p. 14.

of the various laws and policies that regulate road transportation particularly for the thousands of commuters travelling out of the townships each day to go to work. Townships in the twentieth century were imagined by segregationist and apartheid government which constructed the settlement based on racial prejudice and the presence using different railway networks.

Berman discusses the paradox of modernity by exploring self-alienation, as explained by Pascal, as "the inability for man to face himself", and Rousseau as "self-identity linked to property",[66] both hold truth, however there is a lack of honesty in the amount of power possessed by the individual over herself or himself. Incidences involving gender, race and class create a nuanced experience that extends beyond the confines of the individual/collective and tradition/urban. Dilip Gaonkar articulates the limitations of modernity using the categorisations of societal modernisation, linked with scientism and the doctrine of progress, and cultural modernity, based on self-exploration, in his exploration of alternative modernity and inclusion of the 'Other'.[67] Literature in postmodernity, and more recently altermodernity, has emerged in Europe and America; within non-European society terms such as alternative modernities, subaltern modernities and peripheral modernities have gained traction. Mignolo draws to our attention the dangerous commonality between these schools of thought,

> "…these narratives and arguments maintain the centrality of Euro-American modernity
> or, if you wish, assume one 'modernity of reference' and put themselves in subordinate
> positions. … they assume that 'the world is flat' in its triumphal march toward the future
> while concealing coloniality."[68]

The claim made by Mignolo is that 'modernity' instead of being dismantled is being appropriated by the East and South Asia when the rhetoric of de-Westernisation is used to oil the economic machinery. It is prudent to acknowledge that these concepts are the project of the elites within society, inclusive of academics, and as such it comes as no surprise that reform instead of dismantling is advanced. The argument that Mignolo forwards is that alternative modernities fail to channel their energies towards the dismantling of Euro-modernities, instead they rather advocate for the change of power from one group to the next. Frederick Cooper

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[66] Berman, M. 1970. *The Politics of Authenticity: Radical Individualism and the Emergence of Modern Society.* Atheneum, pp. 146 – 150.

[67] Gaonkar, D. 1999. 'On Alternative Modernities' in Gaonkar, D (ed) *Alter/Native Modernities.* Duke University Press, pp.1 – 18.

[68] Ibid., p. 42.

shares similar sentiments by challenging the concept of alternative modernities by arguing that it is counterintuitive; scholars in this subfield often rely on caricatured concepts of post-Enlightenment European history that lacks debate. James Ferguson argues against multiple alternatives to modernity, stating that such an approach fails to acknowledge the structure of material inequalities.[69] Mignolo demonstrates more confidence in transmodernity;[70] this concept parallels postmodernity and altermodernity[71]. Its anchor lies in de-linking from the polycentric capitalist political economy. Advanced discourse has been made in 'de-colonial cosmopolitanism'; its focus is on the rejection of modernity and genocidal reason. He goes further to justify the move towards transmodernity:

> "While Kant's cosmopolitanism was Euro-centred and Imperial, de-colonial cosmopolitanism becomes critical of both, Kant's imperial legacies, and of polycentric capitalism in the name of de-Westernisation."[72]

Mignolo's analysis and breakdown of various forms of modernity theories and its counters omits the question of gendered spaces which is critical to the 'modern' world. Human interactions cannot be reduced simply to the economy and wealth, the interplay of power dynamics is far more complex than articulated in the article engaged; for instance many women can resonate with modernity as only a partial taste of liberal expression. Thomas alludes to a more realistic approach towards understanding 'modernity'. She suggests that it be treated as an intermediate analytical concept for better, in-depth insight to the stories and histories of those who fall outside historicity.[73] The answer towards an alternative to 'modernity' may well be hidden in the mosaic created by different theorisations (inclusive of critiques) of 'modernity'.

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[69] Thomas, L. 'Modernity's Failings', p. 733.

[70] "Transmodernity is Enrique Dussel's project to transcend Eurocentric modernity using the incomplete project of decoloniality. Dussel argues for a multiplicity of decolonial critical responses to 'modernity' from subaltern cultures and location of colonized people. It is equivalent to "diversality as a universal project" which is a product of "critical border thinking", "critical diasporic thinking" or "critical thinking from the margins" as an epistemic intervention from the diverse subalterns." – paraphrase Ramón Grosfoguel, see, Grosfoguel, R. 'Decolonising Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality.' *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World.* Vol. 1, No. 1.

[71] See, Bourriaud, N. 2009. 'Altermodern' in Bourriaud, N (ed.) *Altermodern: Tate Triennial.* London: Tate

[72] Mignolo, W. 'The Darker Side of the Enlightenment. A Decolonial Reading of Kant's Geography' in Elden, S & Mendieta, E. (eds.) *Kant's Geography.* Stony Brook: Stony Brook Press, forthcoming.

[73] Thomas, L. 'Modernity's Failings', p. 738.

The concept of "modernity" and "modernisation" has different definitions and manifestations as discussed in this section, each with its own merits and limitations. South Africa in general and black urban townships in particular, in the twentieth century possesses multiple characteristics of "modernity" which fit into different moulds presented by different theorists on the subject matter. Part of the question explored in this study is "what is modernity?" and "can black urban township railways be engaged/examined as sites for the modernisation" of urban spaces in the context of Tembisa as imagined by apartheid spatial planning?" and if so, "how did Tembisa, and other black urban township, residents contribute to and configure this process of modernisation?"

'Remembering' the Past

History as a discipline has claimed a place of objective and infallible truths of the past and has been manipulatively used as political rhetoric. Approaching the past can be arduous due to the flawed nature of recollection and memory of the mind,[74] and the biased nature of documentation due to regulatory bureaucracies of those with access to archiving. Methodology for analysing the past requires sensitivity to hermeneutical nuances that exist in texts, visuals and orality. Communities with a past marred by coloniality are subjected to a history constructed as a binary of dominant and muted narratives. Histories emerging from such environments are obscured because emphasis is placed on the dominant narrative created by those with political and economic power, to the exclusion of subalterns, and influences of horizontal power.[75] Considering the debates around historicity as presented by Ashis Nandy, South Africa contradicts the idea of "history"[76] and demonstrates the tensions between modernity, as a Eurocentric construct, and the marginal histories of non-Europeans encountering the Eurocentric history of themselves.

The subject of history "cannot speak" because it is either dead[77] (or unreachable), or the memory is not always a reliable source of actual events. While all people have a past, not

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[74] Thomson, A; Frisch, M & Hamilton, P. 'The Memory and History Debates: Some International Perspectives'. *Oral History Society, 25th Anniversary Issue.* Vol. 22, No. 2, p. 33.

[75] The concept of horizontal power is borrowed in this context from Dipesh Chakrabarty's text 'Subaltern Studies and Postcolonial Historiography", the reference to the term in this text prioritises the daily forms of resistance of the oppressed South Africans outside of elitist political organisations.

[76] As referred to in Ashis Nandy's 'History's Forgotten Doubles'.

[77] Nandy, A. 'History's Forgotten Doubles' in Pomper, P. Elphick, R.H. & Vann, R.T. (eds.) *World History: Ideologies, Structures and Identities.* 1998, p. 174.

all have a history; such a bold statement becomes justifiable if one considers Ashis Nandy's conception of historical consciousness. Nandy claims that within historical consciousness there exist people with and without history.[78] The historical are those who have the power to write and shape the past and the ahistorical are the people that exist 'outside' of history.[79] The ahistoricity of non-Europeans was constructed and imposed by Europeans through colonisation; this is not to say that the ahistorical are without a past, instead it illustrates that the construction of the discipline of history is embedded in imperiality that fails to accommodate alternative methods of conceptualizing or constructing what history is or should 'become'.[80]

This study will engage with photographs as one of the manners in which black Africans are clearly present in the past of railway histories in South Africa despite the absence of their narrative within the recorded archive. The presence of black African people within the archive that traces the development and growth of technology and infrastructure in the country is used as an end to a means that justifies the physical and epistemological violence and cost of civilising the subaltern. Exclusion of subalterns from railway histories is not unique to South Africa, Lucy Taska has embarked on a study that looks at the railway workshops in Eveleigh, Australia, and how historians have ignored the presence of women or Aboriginal employees within the century operations of the Eveleigh Railways.[81] Due to the Other existing outside the parameters set by historicism Taska has resorted to an interdisciplinary approach to fill in the historical gaps of ahistorical Beings, this approach is similarly adopted by this study.

There is a dominant narrative anchored in Eurocentricity that presupposes that history can only be constructed using principles of objectivity and rationality informed by the Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers such as Georg Hegel went as far as saying that Africa existed outside of "universal history".[82] An imposition of a universalist conception of time has negated the plural conceptions of time which influence the global community and how they

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[78] Ashis Nandy describes the "ahistorical" not as people with the absence of the past. Rather he emphasises that they exist "outside" of history as dictated by the Western knowledge systems of historical consciousness. His argument is rooted in the importance of plurality and how the understandings of time and space influence the different ways in which people arrive at the past.
[79] Nandy, A. 'History's Forgotten Doubles', p. 159.
[80] Ibid., p. 167.
[81] Taska, L. 1999. 'Technology, Work, Gender and Citizenship at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops Precinct: An Historical Interpretation of Landscape, Identity and Mobilisation.' *Labour History*. No. 76, p. 155.
[82] Thomas, L. 'Modernity's Failings', p. 727.

understand and arrive at the past.[83] Historians and many other scholars have countered the dominant narrative of coloniality that positions non-Europeans as inferior by demonstrating and documenting the agency and histories of 'ahistorical' people. However, whenever historians attempt historicising history they follow the strict rules of historiography which are highly conservative and represent a single mode of understanding the past, time and space.[84] These limitations exist in historical consciousness and enable the ahistoricity of non-Europeans. Nandy states that historical consciousness is totalitarian in negotiating space within the modern world; he argues that the dismissal of other modes of experiencing and constructing the past is a contemporary phenomenon.[85]

The construction of the past of black African communities and their encounter with 'modernity' is complex for a number of reasons, not least that of the cross-fertilisation of rural traditions and township culture. Modes of arriving at the past differ for those with isolated experiences of rural and urban cultures, and for those who directly or indirectly move in-between the spaces using rail travel at some point in their journey. This complexity is comparable to societies that use mythologisation as a means of constructing the past (Bengal is used as an example by Nandy) wherein spirituality is bound with the present time. Rural and urban dwellers engage in variant manifestations of Ubuntu communitarianism informed by the environment; for instance spirituality in urban spaces such as churches (in Christianity) tend to dominant over traditional practises.[86] The influence of missionary work cannot go unnoticed in this regard, particularly in reforming and shaping black urban settlement locations. Many people in black urban townships are confronted with the task of balancing the relationship of their rural 'past' and 'modern' present whilst in a position of temporality in both. Consequently, the oversimplified assumption is frequently made that the urban/rural binary translates to the modern/unmodern, traditional binary; that the 'modern' world represents itself based on empirical evidence and rationality while the traditional is anchored in morality/spirituality. The remembrance of the past is closely linked with its ethical meaning; this becomes possible

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[83] Ibid., p. 164.
[84] Ibid., p. 165.
[85] Ibid., p. 160.
[86] The change in the spiritual centre is one that is also present in the rural from traditional to Christian forms. Christianity becomes more popular and accessible in the urban areas due to its association with 'civilisation' and/or 'modernity' while a factor of environment is central to where traditional healers practise. Culturally, many things change in cities due to the lack of access to land and other resources. These factors, among others, do affect ways by which the individual remembers and arrives at a past.

through the principle of principled forgetfulness found in mythologies of ahistorical 'histories'.[87] One can stretch the point and say that ubuntu embodies the principle of principled forgetfulness and finds expression, albeit reformed, in urban townships. Ubuntu, similar to the Bengali community, operates using mythology and transcendental theories. 'History' as observed by Nandy is uncomfortable with transcendental philosophy and the ambiguity it brings; it is for these reasons that the ahistorical continue living and creating themselves 'outside' of history.[88] Through railway poetry written by many black African poets, a common thread that exists in most of this literature is the consistent connectedness of the material and immaterial world. The engagement of the black communities with this permanent infrastructure is judged not only on scientific and technological merit but on moral and ethical grounds as well.

Modern history and historians are said to lack self-reflexivity and only conform to the historical model based on modern scientific enterprise monopolised by Eurocentrism.[89] The frequent and seeming inability to historicise history is based on the preservation of Eurocentric knowledge that erases the existence of 'Others'. Although history may be constructed by the historically minded who claim ownership of the metanarrative, the ahistorical engage part-ownership of their present selves.[90] The colonial, segregationist and apartheid government attempted to dominate the narrative of South African histories; however it failed to control the making of the past outside of 'history'. For instance, during apartheid the invisible[91] black Africans heavily influenced the Native laws and residential segregation enforced by the government thus acting as agents of not only their past but the construction of some parts of history.

This study will engage with alternative ways of imagining the past and the possible ways of constructing the (ahistorical) Being in line with an organically humanistic conception of self. Nandy's criticism of historicism and its method is highly abstract and creates space for

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[87] Ibid., p. 162.
[88] Ibid., p. 163 & 165.
[89] Ibid., p. 168.
[90] Ibid., p. 163.
[91] See Deborah Posel, 'Modernity and Measurement: Further Thoughts on the Apartheid State' where she categorises/defines the invisible group as those black Africans who were occupying the urban regions "illegally". These included anyone who did not have a work permit, however; these laws pardoned blackwomen. Although in the 1950s as a means of surveillance the government wanted blackwomen to move around with a dompass, this was met with serious resistance culminating in the Women's March.

a reconceptualization and insertion of the subaltern in the past. My task in this research is an attempt to locate the continuity between the nostalgic past and some of the evidence of the subaltern's past traceable in the archive, and analyse the intersections that exist of the ahistorical Being within the corridors of historicism through engaging various signifiers of 'modernity' within railway histories in South Africa from 1860s to 1960s.

Research Methodology

To investigate the role of the railways in the lives of black African communities, its influence in shaping the social organisation of its people and how this relates to modernity, this dissertation will be qualitative, and discourse will be engaged through textual analyses of primary and secondary sources. Focal to the study is the centrality of archives and other forms of documented histories such as poetry and photographs. The study is cognisant of the shortfalls of archival histories, primary and secondary texts when used as sole sources and aims at reconciling these shortfalls through engaging and merging the merits of the abovementioned sources. Studies within the social sciences are complex due to the nature of the subject that is known and unknown simultaneously. There have been various attempts at approaching social science research using various methodologies and for this study; the ontological and epistemological dimensions will be used to better understand the content already existing within the archive.

Documentary Sources

Primary, archival sources in the form of documents will be used. These will include government, associations and railway corporation information in the form of documents, minutes, reports, newspaper articles, policy and policy amendments, legal documents, court cases and development programmes (particularly, the joint venture between the railway corporations and the government). These documents are in the public domain and are accessible at the South African History Archives, Chamber of Commerce (Gauteng), Heritage Railway Association of Southern Africa, National Archives and Records Services, Transnet Heritage Library, University of the Witwatersrand Historical Papers Archives and Transvaal Archives Depot.

Secondary documentary sources in the form of published books, book chapters, internet sources, and journals articles will be used.

Photographs and Poetry as Historical Sources

As a researcher of muted histories, interrogation of the various impacts of coloniality in knowledge production and the archive are important as a means to demystify the obscured histories of the Other, especially relating to histories of science and technology. For this study the reading of photographs and poetry are used in lieu of formal or academic written documents on black participation and occupation within railway histories in South Africa. Visual history is used to fill in the gaps that exist within the traditional archive by merging empirical evidence and decolonial epistemologies as a means of better locating and constructing the narrative of the Other/ahistorical Being. Ontological considerations are necessary in the assessment of the changes and ramifications of railway infrastructure, and all its forms and extensions, on the social, economic, political and geographic composition of South African railway histories since they open space for analysis on the observable and non-observable as well as the verbal and non-verbal. The use of photographs as a method is important because it accounts for the presence of the subaltern within the exclusionary archive.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter One - Introduction
This chapter will provide the introductory context; discuss the aims and objectives, literature survey and methodology.

Chapter Two – Railway Transportation and 'modern' Capital before the Union of South Africa: Historical Background
This chapter will examine the influence and impact of modern capital investment from European banks in the emergence of railway construction in South Africa and the contributions of railway diplomacy between the Cape Colony and the South African Republic.

Chapter Three – Situating the Narrative of the Ahistorical Being within the Railway Histories Archive
This chapter looks the muted narratives of black African labourers and communities in the railway histories archive by engaging photographs and railway poetry coalesced with an analysis of the theory of historicism

Chapter Four – the Making of South African Railways and Harbours, Urbanisation and Townships

This chapter will discuss the establishment and commercial ambitions of the SAR&H as a product of the Union of South Africa Act 1910. Furthermore, it will follow the relationship between railway administrations and municipalities in the conceptualization and construction of black urban townships and the transportation enabling racial residential zoning.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The concluding chapter will explore how railway histories can be reimagined along pluri-versal conceptualisations of modernity that acknowledge the contributions of ahistorical Beings as agents and participants in the histories of technology and science in South Africa

Chapter Two

Railway Transportation and 'modern' Capital before the Union of South Africa: Historical Background

Introduction

Railways in South Africa have deep and rich histories that cut across all races and classes from the labour, politics, spatial planning and segregation of the nineteenth century through to contemporary times. Throughout the decades an archive has been compiled that traces the intersections of railway infrastructure and the people of South Africa through the different administrative faces of this industry. Rail transportation may have played a direct role in influencing the social, cultural and spatial identities of the people, however, its link with modern capital has largely shaped not only the transport industry and economy but managed to construct a 'national' identity through infrastructure. Railway infrastructure was one of the tools used by colonial and apartheid governments to foreground a deliberate westernisation and urbanisation project for 'white' South Africa.[92] Rail transportation and infrastructure has become a historical site for local, national and trans-national mobility, urban spatial planning, and railway segregation and apartheid. However, to understand the nuanced social, economic and political histories of railway histories in the twentieth century it is imperative to engage the histories of early railway companies of the late nineteenth century in South Africa. This is particularly important because of the influence of railways in the moulding and realisation of modernity in South Africa.

There are three distinct features that characterise the emergence of rail transportation in South Africa, European capital investment, labour and political tensions between the Republic and the colonies. These characteristics manifested differently in the various regions because of multiple factors that will be outlined and discussed throughout the chapter. Some scholars have written on South African railway histories of the nineteenth century, however, a lot of emphasis is accorded to the companies and governments and very little attention has been given to labourers and the people. Scholars such as Gordon Pirie and Dirk Heydenrych have contributed significantly towards research on the social histories of the railways but for them, and emerging researchers alike, the archive has proven to have a resounding silence on the

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[92] Dubow, S. 2014. *Apartheid, 1948 – 1994.* Oxford Histories: Oxford University Press, United Kingdom. p. 1.

lives, narratives and histories of the subaltern. This chapter will engage the railway histories of the Natal Railway Government (NGR), Cape Government Railways (CGR) and Nederlandsche Zuid-Afrikaansche Spoorwegmaatschappij (NZASM) by examining the role of capital investment, labour and sociality during the construction of railways. From the contextual base laid through this historical overview, chapter two will engage in a discussion that thoroughly examines these institutions and the narratives of black Africans in their encounter with the infrastructure.

Early 'modern' Capital and the Railways in South Africa: Natal and Cape

Natal Government Railways and Layered Racialism in Natal

The topography of the Natal colony necessitated creative approaches in relation to transportation and the construction of other infrastructures, such as bridges. The deep gradients of the region caused multiple drainage issues and vulnerability to flooding. As part of a solution in addressing this environmental and geographic crisis a British civil engineer, Albert Robertson, proposed the construction plan for a railway line from the Point to Durban in 1859. Within two weeks of this announcement the Natal Railway Company was founded. Robertson was subsequently appointed to head the project with the Provisional Board of Directors, namely Messrs Robert Acutt, George Cato, Adolph Coqui, James Proudfoot and George H Wissing under the chair of Captain William Smerdon, representing the sugar, commerce and civil interests of the colony; industries that were very instrumental in the economy of Natal.[93]

The Natal colony was the first region in southern Africa to construct a railway line that was open for traffic in 1860. This line extended over a 3.22 km distance from the Point to Durban and was made possible through a joint-stock enterprise capital investment of £10,000.[94] Initially this line used animal power until such a time that the Natal Railway Company purchased a 4ft. 8in. gauge steam locomotive.[95] Fourteen years later, in 1874, the line was extended to the Umgeni River which is 6.44 km from Durban. The investment in the 4ft. 8in. gauge was soon rendered obsolete with the introduction and adoption of a 3ft. 6in. gauge steam locomotive. The shift to using the 3ft. 6in. gauge was first introduced by William George

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[93] The Natal Train. Accessed Online, <https://www.sahistory.org.za/natal-train>.

[94] Hunter, D. 1905. 'The development and Working of Railways in the Colony of Natal.' South African Journal of Science. Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 52.

[95] Hart, T. 1998. 'Cultural Historical Assessment of the Hex Passrailway, Worcester to de Doorns.' n.p.

Brounger, a civil engineer from CGR who presented it to the Cape government as a cheaper and faster option that simultaneously catered for the geographical contours of the region. This would later be used as the South African standard and as such earned Brounger the title 'father of railways'; a title that mirrors the naming process common in Enlightenment similar to Rene Descartes' naming as the 'father of modern philosophy'.

Several external (international) interests attempted to invest in the construction of the railways in Natal but were vetoed by the government in London. Natal colony had a strong kinship with the British government thus, despite their interest in exploring these offers they had to reject them. Day argues that while it may seem that the Natal government may not have had external financial investment support for this project, its lack of acceptance and or consideration of other external interests were consistent with the views held by the British government. The British wanted to maintain control over the colony through a non-infiltrated government and the lack of external capital investment from other empires allowed for the hegemonic power of Britain in the colony. Subsequent to public and parliamentary debates and commentary the government in 1876 officially purchased the two railway lines in Natal from the Natal Railway Company for £40,000 giving rise to the Natal Government Railways (NGR).[96] While it is true that Natal constructed the first operational railway, it was the Cape government that was first to purchase and gain full ownership of the railways in its territory in 1873. Natal government only had full ownership of their railways in 1876; NGR was thus prompted to engage in similar construction policies as those of the CGR.[97] Below is a table that indicates the distance of constructed lines in Natal, the Cape, SAR and the Orange Free State by 1890. Overall, due to the larger territory and financial investment the Cape railways covered a significantly larger distance than Natal; because the Transvaal was a late bloomer the constructed railway distance was the shortest compared to the other regions and in the Orange Free State railway development was dependent on the Cape and partially on Natal since its central location provided easier access to the Transvaal.

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[96] Day, J. R. 1963. '*Railways of Southern Africa',* p. 28 – 29.
[97] Hoy, William. 1922. 'Railway Development in South Africa.' *The Sun and Agricultural Journal of South Africa.* p. 69.

Region	Kilometres Built
Cape Government Railways	2,846.12 km
Natal Government Railways	494.07 km
Transvaal (NZASM)	67.59 km
Orange Free State (CGR)	Approx. 194.73 km
Total	**Approx. 3,603.32 km**

Table 1: Summary of the railway construction distance in the different regions in 1890[98]

Over the years the NGR would invest in the extension of the mainline as follows: in December 1880, a line from Durban to Maritzburg covering a distance of 70.5 miles was opened; followed by an extension to Ladysmith on 21 June 1886 of approximately 190 miles; covering a distance of 268.5 miles is the line to Newcastle constructed on 15 May 1890. Due to growing attention on the goldfields and the growing tensions between Kruger and Rhodes, Natal was strategically positioned to negotiate a railway line that connected its harbours to the Transvaal border while SAR was fundraising for the completion of the Delagoa Bay line. After negotiations between SAR and the Natal colony, an agreement was reached by NGR with NZASM, allowing for a penetration of a Natal railway into the Transvaal on the condition that the general manager of NZASM becomes the contractor for the project. Charlestown station was opened on 7 April 1891 and its link to the Transvaal was completed in 1895 with a distance of 304.5 miles between the two nodes.[99]

Prior to the construction and completion of the abovementioned railway extensions Karl Gundelfinger (President of the Durban Chamber of Commerce 1926 – 1927) stated that there were two schools of thought pertaining to the development of railways in the region that were entertained in Parliamentary debates. One side was in support of doubling the mainline connecting Durban to Ladysmith because of the high traffic of people and goods on that route while the other side leaned instead towards the exploration of an 'Alternate Line' that would traverse other parts of the region away from the mainline. Due to the traffic problems experienced by the Durban-Ladysmith line after the Union of South Africa it is clear that the 'Alternate Line' group emerged victorious.[100] The 'Alternate Line' was based on the premise that other industries that were not connected to the mainline would also gain access to the

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[98] Ibid., p. 71.

[99] Hunter, D. 1905. 'The development and Working of Railways in the Colony of Natal.' *South African Journal of Science.* Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 58.

[100] Gundelfinger, K. 1926. 'Natal and Railway Development.' *The Sun and Agriculture Journal of South Africa.* p. 661.

convenience of rail transportation since the material used for mechanised transportation was durable for the environmental conditions of Natal.

The infant stages of railway building were highly dependent on both skilled and unskilled labour. Labour recruitment was coordinated by railway companies in accordance with the labour policies of the government. Within the Natal colony, Indian indentured labour was common practice and was already implemented in sectors like agriculture. The Natal colonial government had an established arrangement and labour policies for indentured Indian labour for industries such as sugar and coal. By the time railway construction emerged, the Natal Railway Company was more than willing to explore this labour recruitment policy as a means to save costs seeing that there were "no" external investors. Railway companies understood the difficulty of manipulating the costing of material for railway construction causing them to cut costs in other areas. Unskilled labour was therefore a source where costs could be saved, this was a different case for skilled labour because it mainly comprised of employees imported from Europe. Indentured labour was attractive for railway companies because it was assumed that it would cut costs while simultaneously ensuring that there was sufficient labour available in the colony reserved for the agricultural sector.[101] Heydenrych is one of the few scholars that engage the social histories of the railways in Natal through the exploration of Indian labour in the late nineteenth century.
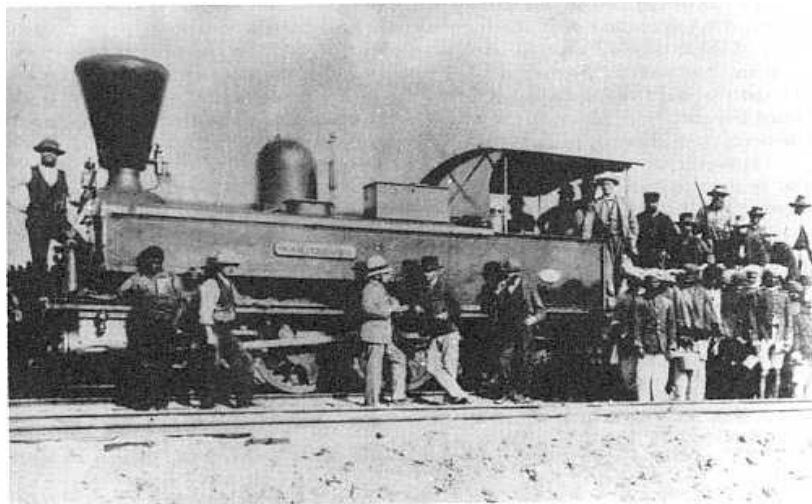
Picture 1: The Contractor's Locomotive in Maritzburg C. 1880, with Indian Railway Employees[102]

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[101] Heydenrych, D. H. 1986. 'Indian Railway Labour in Natal, 1876 – 1895: The Biggest Indian Work Force in the Colony.' *Historia.* Vol. 31, No. 3, p. 12.

[102] Ibid., p. 11.

The law was instrumental in facilitating indentured labour for railway construction. A contract between the government and Wythes & Jackson firm had Clause 13 that entailed that two thirds of the labourers for their railway project had to be from outside the colony. Law No. 2 of 1870 stated that £3 per annum should be payable to the government for every male Indian labourer. Initially the company operated under this knowledge, however it was discovered that an advance of £30 needed to be settled for every labourer. This added cost was not factored in the costing of the company and as such if the firm were to move ahead with such a configuration they would be operating at a loss just from labour alone. By 1877 only five Indian men were obtained by the company. For the railway companies this obstacle required a more tactical and creative approach and this was done by looking at the experiences of Mauritius which had used indentured Indian labour for their own railway construction. Mauritians encountered their own challenges with this labour force which was not always 'competent'; many factors may have caused such an outcome.[103]

NGR was consistent in favouring the employment of indentured Indian male labour over African male labour. It was predominantly Tsongas from Mozambique and Delagoa Bay who were recruited for railway labour employment with rare cases of the recruitment of Zulus who lived within the colony. Over and above the reservation of African male labour for the agricultural sector the two major events of the Anglo-Zulu war, the Battle of Isandlwana (Zulu victory) and the Anglo-Zulu War (British victory) of 1879 played a huge role in why NGR colonial administrators did not favour having Zulu employees. Jeff Guy argues that the motivation for the war was predominantly economic therefore non-employment of the Zulu people was based not only on the anxiety of a possible rebellion but was also a way of weakening Zulu people's access to crucial parts of the economy thus enabling British economic monopoly.[104] Apart from the political dynamics at play between the Zulu and British people in Natal, railway companies had to tackle the financial implications that accompanied each decision. It is therefore not surprising that by the time the Mauritian railways were completed Natal was ready to recruit its unemployed indentured Indian labour.[105]

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[103] Ibid., pp. 12 – 13.
[104] Guy. J. 1979. 'The British Invasion of Zululand: Some Thoughts for the Centenary Year.' *Reality: a Journal of Liberal and Radical Opinion.* Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 8 – 14.
[105] Heydenrych, D. H. 'Indian Railway Labour in Natal, 1876 – 1895,' pp. 12 – 14.

The statement below by J F Manisty, Superintendent of the Indian and Native Labour Department, and the Protector of Immigrants clearly shows the engineered racial discrimination of African labourers and the logic used to exclude the Zulu and other African labourers from railway employment.[106] In 1891 Manisty is recorded in the Selssional Papers, *Legislative Council* responding to questions as follows:

> *Question: Why do you have recourse to Indians at all?*
> *Answer: Well, as a matter of fact, you cannot do without them.*
> *Question: Why?*
> *Answer: Because there is no other source of labour for the work they are applied for.*
> *Question: What about the Natives?*
> *Answer: They would never do for the works the Indians are put to. We cannot rely upon the Natives.*
> *Question: Then, you employ Indians not because you cannot get Natives, but because Natives are not fit for the work?*
> *Answer: You might say it both ways. Even if the Natives were procurable, they would not be suitable for the work; but we can never rely upon them from one day to another.[107]*

The common racial stereotyping used by the European railway contractors was that Indians had the intellectual capacity to handle and perform tasks that African labourers were unable to. However, even within this high esteem of Indian labourers, the parameters of white superiority were decisively marked and Indians were incapable of entering that zone of white-ness, translated as knowing. This vocabulary and rhetoric used by railway contractors and company officials was part of the means to justify indentured labour in the colony. By normalising the "incapacity" of African male labourers, railway companies found strategies to not only subvert public scrutiny on the colonial tax evasion but it indirectly avoided tensions and negotiations with African leaders/chiefs.[108]

NGR was the biggest absorber of indentured labour but the nature of the work did not accommodate for the employment of women. Indian women who were assigned to NGR therefore found themselves without work and without payment from the company. Most of the Indian women who were placed near city centres such as Durban and Pietermaritzburg resorted to selling basket-ware at the market. The Indian women who were unfortunately located in the countryside struggled with alternative employment. [109] The labour culture of the railways was

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[106] Ibid., pp. 14 – 15 & 17.
[107] Ibid., p. 17.
[108] Ibid., p. 14.
[109] Beall, J. 1990. 'Women under Indenture in Colonial Natal, 1860 – 1911,' in Clarke, C.; Peach, C. & Vertovec, S. (eds.) *South Asians Overseas: Migration and Ethnicity.* Cambridge University Press, p. 60.

exclusionary based on race, class and gender; the informal economic activity of the Indian women in colonial Natal has persisted into contemporary times and is mostly observed in township railways.

Jo Beall writes extremely necessary histories on the complexity and precariousness of indentured Indian women in Natal and how the law was used to further marginalise their existence. The law was often seen as progressive by the colonial government despite its failure to protect those located at the margins, such as women. It is unfortunate that it has been difficult to locate literature, histories or records written on blackwomen who may have migrated with African male labourers from Mozambique, Delagoa Bay and the hinterland. Oftentimes the written histories of Africans in Natal are dominated by Zulu histories and narratives. The invisibility of blackwomen within the historical memory is persistent in many written histories, laws, policies and knowledge production. Their subalternity is seen to be located at the furthest margins of the periphery. While it is true that the human-ness of black African men may have been suspect, that of blackwomen seems to have been entirely erased and non-existent from the historical consciousness. Particularly in spaces that involve technological and scientific engagements and developments.

Racial categorisation and the colonial discriminatory culture spilled over into the consumption and use of the railways. The segregation and racism of the NGR was not unique, the entire colony and most of its institutions were rooted in the normalisation of separated-ness based on racial and class hierarchies. The Natal railways were constructed for the sole purpose and convenience of white businesses and people. NGR began to experience racial tensions from railway commuters' decades after its first operational train in 1860. At this time, the train was operating locally and was infrequent. Many Africans did not opt to use it since it was cheaper and faster to walk. However, with the growing demand for labour in the mining industry the train usage patterns changed. After the completion of the railway line connecting Natal to the Transvaal racial tensions and anxieties began to surface for the Natal railway commuters as Africans started to now use the infrastructure frequently. Law no. 3 of NGR in 1877 stipulated that racial division will be enforced for rail travel with the enforcement of the colour bar in 1890.[110]

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[110] Pirie, G. H. 1989. 'Racial Segregation of Passengers on the Cape and Natal Colonial Railways.' *Historia.* Vol. 34, No. 2, pp. 50 – 51.

There was no formalised law that enforced segregation, since black[111] (Indian and African/Griqua) had the right to purchase tickets for any class they could afford. In 1882 Natal Railways Commission noted that "better black classes" and white passengers were forced to ride with "naked and half-naked Natives from the kraal"[112] and the railway administration was not satisfied with this configuration. The NGR instead adopted an informal approach towards racial segregation with discretion in response to their white commuters' displeasure with travelling in the same carriage as Indians or Africans. Staff members of the NGR were swift in moving and shifting black passengers from their allocated carriages to accommodate white passengers. Most of the terms and reasons used to justify separation, mainly from the passengers, included terms describing blacks as 'dirty' and disease carriers.[113]

Reported cases of racism were not just between black and white passengers but there were multiple cases of Griqua-Indian-African racism dominating the space. The racial hierarchy was European/white at the top, interchangeable position between the Griqua and Indians depending on class status in the middle and at the bottom were Africans. These divisions were further nuanced along class and gender dimensions. Language was central in the layered racialism that unfolded in Natal. Common terms used by railway commuters who regarded themselves as superior to other groups were often derogatory and dehumanising. A white passenger was shifted from carriage sharing with blacks because they claimed to have become ill from the 'nauseating' smell from an Indian passenger seated in second class. While another white passenger advocated for separation on the basis of an 'overpowering effluvia' from African passengers.[114] Indians mirrored white racial sentiments as they felt superior to Africans and similarly accused Africans of being dirty and unpleasant. This may have also been influenced by the racism of colonial governments. However, dynamics of racism and identities are far more complex.

The Natal railways started as a small localised form of transportation that evolved overtime to penetrate the Transvaal and other surrounding regions. Labour was central to this development and indentured labour played the greatest role. Racism and apartheid was also

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[111] In the context of this discussion the term 'black' is an encapsulation of the Indian, African and Griqua peoples and other marginal groups that are not from European descent or 'unmixed' ancestry.

[112] *A Report of the Natal Railway Commission 1882* quoted in Pirie, G. H. 1989. 'Racial Segregation of Passengers on the Cape and Natal Colonial Railways,' p. 50.

[113] Pirie, G. H. 1989. 'Racial Segregation of Passengers on the Cape and Natal Colonial Railways,' pp. 51 – 52.

[114] Ibid., pp. 52 – 53.

enforced in the colony, in tune with the colonial and western conceptions of the modern Being. The historical engagement of Indians with railway transportation in British India from 1832 may have been part of the reasons informing the positioning of Indians in the colony, who were now treated as more human due to an earlier encounter with civility and modernity. On the other hand, the histories of Africans remains marginalised and muted despite the presence of colonial and Zulu political and economic tensions. However, the neglect of African histories and existence was a given unless specific reference to their un-humanness was necessary as a tool for the justification of coloniality and the brutality it came with.

British Capital and the making of the Cape Government Railways

The Kimberley diamond mining industry was an influential catalyst in the construction of the railways in the Cape Colony. The Cape railways formed part of Cecil Rhodes' vision of a railway network that would cut across the African continent connecting all the regions between Cape and Cairo. This was a vision embedded in the solidification of imperial power and the imperial footprint in the continent. Histories of the World Wars, regional transportation and trans-national migration were to be affected by the outcomes of this vision in the twentieth century. Inspired by the success of the collaboration of the mining industry and railway transportation in England and North America,[115] the Cape Colony was one of the earlier regions that explored long distance railway transportation as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Initially, the Cape of Good Hope Western Railway Company was established in 1845 but it failed to take-off due to lack of investors from London, despite the lobbying and endorsement from the colonial government via the South African Commercial Advertiser and other avenues.[116]

Multiple factors informed the scepticism regarding this form of mobility in the Cape; religious and political leaders were not in support of this venture and did not believe in its viability. As such there were debates for several years until finally in 1853 the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company was founded. It is through this company that the construction of major railway tracks was to be guided.

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[115] Martin, P. 2004. 'Railways in South Africa,' p. 2.

[116] Hart, T. 1998. 'Cultural Historical Assessment of the Hex Passrailway, Worcester to de Doorns.' Prepared by Archaeology Contracts Office of the University of Cape Town and commissioned by the Ninham Shand Consulting Engineers. pp. n.p.

"The purpose of the company was to "*introduce into the Cape Colony a progressive system of railways, and to supply its capital safe and convenient access and facilities for the reception and repair of shipping, the want of which has so long and severely experienced as a serious prejudice to the commercial and agricultural trade of the colony...*""[117]

Because railway construction requires a lot of financial investment, the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company created a clause in their charter that pressed for an investment of £600,000.00 for a sixth of their shares from the government; after negotiations lasting two years the Cape government folded and invested in the company.[118] The Cape Town Railway and Dock Company had to appeal to and rely on foreign investment for their original share capital. Due to the political alliance and proximity of the Cape government with British Empire it was the London banks that eventually came to fund this project. Only in 1858, after concessions, fundraising and resolved legalities, did the government agree to the construction of a railway line from Cape Town to Wellington via Stellenbosch, stretching a distance of 100km.[119]

Railway construction was fairly new on the continent, as such the Cape Town Railway and Dock Company had a crisis of skilled engineers and labourers to undertake the construction. In 1855 William George Brounger, a London civil engineer, was appointed as the lead engineer in the company as he was trusted to be an innovative engineer because of his prior successful performance in railway projects in Europe. Additionally, a group of professional railway workers, known as navvies, were transported from Europe to come and join the project; for the 1872 extension into Worcester, a reported 2,000 navvies were transported into the Cape at a cost of £26,000.00. The majority of the navvies, however, came during the first frantic phase of railway construction from 1873 to 1877.[120] The environmental conditions of the Cape enabled the Cape Town Railways and Docks Company to use only European male labourers, which they preferred over African male labourers.[121] It is no coincidence that professional expertise was outsourced from Europe by the colonial

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[117] Ibid., n.p.

[118] Martin, P. 2004. 'Railways in South Africa,' p. 1.

[119] Ibid., p. 1 & Hart, T. 1998. 'Cultural Historical Assessment of the Hex Passrailway, Worcester to de Doorns', pg. n.p.

[120] Pirie, G. 1992. 'White Railway Labour in South Africa, 1873 – 1924.' p. 102.

[121] Hart, T. 1998. 'Cultural Historical Assessment of the Hex Passrailway, Worcester to de Doorns.' n.p.

administration. The aim was for the success of Brounger's previous endeavours to be mirrored within the colony so as to possess and experience western modernity. This racial labour discrimination would later be undermined by the CGR administration.

Through the railways a developmentalist relationship between African colonial governments and Europe grew more noticeable. Huge reliance was placed on foreign investment by the Cape Town Railways and Dock Company, and later by CGR; this benefitted both the colonial and imperial cause. Europe benefited from this arrangement since its citizens had the opportunity to explore employment externally to reduce competition within their own markets whilst simultaneously tackling unemployment. While the narrative may assume that Africa benefitted tremendously from the modernisation investment from Europe – which ultimately came to inform the unfolding of a dominant western modernity – it cannot be ignored how this arrangement also benefitted these European regions in other forms outside of just economics.

Brounger and his team experienced many geographical challenges which they had to circumvent in the conceptualisation of the railway lines headed towards the Karoo that needed a passage through the mountains. Construction of the railway line through the Hex River Mountain in 1875 – the first commissioned project undertaken by Brounger – was smooth and the locals made good use of the trucks that were transporting the material to construct this infrastructure.[122] This was an indirect way that the presence of the railway line influenced mobility, sociality and economic activity between people coming from remote farms and the town (Worcester). While the railway infrastructure itself had its own life and experiences, it played a very big role in the creation and influences of other worlds and sociality surrounding it and as such the interest from the government comes as no surprise. To quote Paul Martin, "(r)ailways became inseparable from colonial governments' ambitions for development"[123] and as such the Cape colonial, much like other governments, had a vested interest in the expansion of railways in the region.

From his employment in the company until his retirement in 1883, Brounger oversaw the construction of the main railway lines connecting Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London

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[122] Ibid., n.p.
[123] Martin, P. 2004. 'Railways in South Africa,' p. 2.

and Kimberley via the De Aar Junction.[124] Geographical challenges were among the many challenges that railway companies were experiencing in the 1870s because of the vastness of the Cape Colony territory (see map 2). Despite its own challenges and limitations, ox-wagon transportation was proving to be a serious contender to rail transportation, particularly in the Eastern Cape and Transkei regions.[125] This was not ideal for the Cape government. It affected their investments and foreign investment in rail transportation. As a result, there were multiple parliamentary debates that went back and forth as one side attempted to maintain and secure ox-wagon transportation while the other was protecting their investment.

> "[I]n 1886 the general manager of the Cape Government Railways (CGR), Charles B. Elliott, outlined in a Parliamentary bill the measures that might be used to regulate wagon competition. His proposal was to levy a tonnage duty on all wagon freight that the CGR might otherwise transport. He excluded agricultural farm produce carried by a farmer in his own vehicle. The idea was debated briefly and the bill was withdrawn. One parliamentarian, who had not even read the document, declared it unjust. Another recorded astonishment that government could contemplate such a measure. The Committee heard further from a Port Elizabeth merchant that any regulation would be undue interference with trade."[126]

Ox-wagons were cheaper than the railways resulting in the underutilisation of rail transportation, of course, this led to the financial vulnerability of independent railway companies. In 1872, a Parliamentary Select Committee approved the absorption of independent railway companies, their staff and assets under the CGR.[127] By 1873, the Cape Colony government controlled the main railway lines around Cape Town.[128]

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[124] Hart, T. 1998. 'Cultural Historical Assessment of the Hex Passrailway, Worcester to de Doorns.' n.p.

[125] Pirie, G. H. 1993. 'Slaughter by Steam' p. 322.

[126] Ibid., pp. 322 – 323, in his footnote Pirie quotes the following as his sources "A.B. 9-1886, Wagon Duty Bill. Elliott was apparently unaware by his counterpart in the Natal Government Railways in 1883. &Cape (Colony), House of Assembly, Debates, 1886, 9, 206; on Railways, 228".

[127] Hart, T. 1998. 'Cultural Historical Assessment of the Hex Passrailway, Worcester to de Doorns.' n.p.

[128] Martin, P. 2004. 'Railways in South Africa,' p. 2.

Map 1: Sketch Map of South Africa showing British Possessions July 1885[129]

The Cape colonial government was positioned well for foreign investment because of its balanced and/or controlled political climate in the territory. This was beneficial for the Cape Government Railways (CGR) which needed to raise funds for the expansion and construction of other railways. There was support from the London and Westminster Bank, London Stock Exchange, financial institutions and life insurance companies; a total original share of £1,000,000.00 was raised in loans for CGR by 1876.[130] The confidence in the economy and asset investment was tied to the fact that the Cape colonial government had military and financial backing from the Empire.[131] Much of the ways by which the Cape municipalities and government shielded themselves from financial accountability was by not directly borrowing from international investors. In this way they minimised accountability in repayment of the loans by making use of Crown Agents.[132] When considering the table below, it is important to note that the debt owed by CGR by 1885 was influenced by the revenues made by the government and its repayment conditions, hence it does not directly reflect the figures of the value of loans raised. The existence of the Cape Railway and Dock Company, and later CGR was anchored on the modern capitalistic economic model in the construction and realisation of modern infrastructure. Had it not been for the London and Belgian stock-exchange markets, the Cape Colony railways may have not existed or been realised in the nineteenth century.

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[129] From the Scottish Geographical Magazine. Published by the Scottish Geographical Society and edited by Hugh A. Webster and Arthur Silva White. Volume I, 1885.
https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/south_africa_1885.jpg.

[130] Purkis, A. J. 1978. 'The Politics, Capital and Labour of Railway-Building in the Cape Colony, 1870 – 1885.' PhD Thesis, University of Oxford, p. 265.

[131] Ibid., p. 265 – 267.

[132] Ibid., p. 266.

Investment into Cape Government Railways	Amount
Value of Loans raised in London	£19,591,770
Value of Loans raised in the Cape	£898,968
Value of all Loans raised	**£20,490,738**
[Raised in London] Loans specifically for Railway Purchase and Construction	£12,312,792
[Raised in the Cape] Loan specifically for Railway Purchase and Construction	£417,258
Value of all Loans raised for Railway Purchase and Construction	**£12,730,050**
Total outstanding Cape Government Debt on 31 Dec 1885	**£21,672,161**

Table 2: Summary of the Cape Government Borrowing, 1873 - 1885[133]

CGR administration was not without its own hurdles. In 1883, the Cape Railway rates Commission was already exploring the probable deflection of potential railway revenue. Charles B. Elliot, the general manager of CGR, in 1886 proposed a Parliamentary bill that would enforce measures that would regulate ox-wagon competition. This received an unfavourable response and was criticised as unjust to a free market. The biggest concern raised in parliament was in protection of the white entrepreneurs who operated the ox-wagon business and little attention was given to the consequences of the African entrepreneurs in the same position. As such, the CGR was pressured to explore more creative methods to deal with the problem of road competition. A proposal to the harbour companies was to hike the tax of goods that moved out of the port using other modes of transportation between areas where rail transportation was available.[134] This too failed because it would cause problems regarding the drafting and implementation of such a policy, considering that rail transportation left vast regions remote. In varied ways, this would later be adopted by SAR&H in their policy of cross-subsidisation as the rail-road competition continues to persist even in contemporary times. Much of the ox-wagon competition was dominant in the eastern Cape and Transkei region more than it was an issue in Cape Town and the towns and regions surrounding it. While it can be argued that the geographic composition of these regions differs, thus impacting the

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[133] Ibid., p. 278.
[134] Pirie, G. H. 1993. 'Slaughter by Steam', p. 322 – 323.

possibility of railway construction, the population composition may have also effectively influenced this rail-road competition.

Despite the numerous appeals and proposals tabled in parliament by the CGR to regulate road transportation, nothing was done to mitigate the railway crisis through policy. Emphasised in the CGR proposals was the taxation of ox-wagons via tolls and operating licenses for heavy goods that could be transported via rail freight, especially in the areas with branch lines since those networks bore the hardest fiscal brunt. The CGR was pressured by road competition to drop their rail tariffs to stay afloat and from operating at a loss. This backfired because the ox-wagon industry followed suit and dropped their tariffs as well. While this rail-road competition may have been an inconvenience to both sides, it did greatly benefit the merchants who in turn saved money on transportation costs. The ox-wagon industry in the eastern Cape and Transkei region was dominated by Africans who generally operated at lower margins of profit resulting in the majority of white entrepreneurs unwilling to participate. Only in 1907 was race included in the discussion of the rail-road competition, prompted by the estimated £74,000.00 loss of the annual railway revenue to the ox wagons in 1905 and £70,000.00 in 1906. However, race was only discussed in the regions where the business of white owned ox-wagons was threatened and the regions with majority African owned ox-wagons were not even mentioned or studied within the commissioned research and survey by Hutchison on behalf of CGR.[135]

Through the ox-wagon industry, we observe the interaction between Africans and modernity and the manner in which they carved their presence within the unfolding process of modernisation. Firstly, African entrepreneurs are shown to be malleable to the 'new' modern economic model through how they responded to trade competition in a free market. Secondly, the ox-wagon is seen as a traditional form of transportation compared to rail transportation, however; it effectively challenges the myths of development and civilisation by exposing the impracticability of railways as a replacement to road transportation. Moreover, if development and the cogs that operate towards its realisation is said to typify modernity then an argument can be made for a plural approach to understanding the process of modernisation wherein these African entrepreneurs played a pivotal role in the modernisation of South Africa, seeing that they have been actively present from its infant stages.

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[135] Ibid., p. 327 – 331.

With the expansion of railway projects in the Cape Colony the CGR had to rely on the labour of Africans. Unlike its predecessor, the Cape Railway and Dock Company which was particular about hiring white labour, the CGR did not have that luxury. By 1877 the government became the recruiter and employer of skilled and unskilled railway labourers. Many consequences of this arrangement were felt by the government as many employees had access and defence to their human rights due to the binding Colonial constitution. This led to the colonial government's exploration into using indentured Chinese and Indian labour, however the Cape government was cautious as it feared the ramifications of the settlement as was unfolding in Natal. The Department of Public Works was responsible for the recruitment of unskilled labour from the Cape territory and skilled labour from Europe; due to the high volumes of black African labourers this responsibility was shifted to the Department of Native Affairs.[136] This shift allowed for the regulation of remuneration of black African labourers to remain significantly below that of the European labourers, additionally it ensured that certain employment positions were secured and reserved for white employees only. [137]

The records that exist since the governmental takeover of the railways in 1873 to 1877 focus predominantly on the recruitment processes and statistics over and above the conditions of their employees. In 1877, the recruitment of black African labourers by the CGR was ranging from 8,000 – 9,000 and by 1883 had dropped to between 5,000 – 6,000 employees. This drop was informed by the labour demand of black African labourers for the growing diamond mining industry. The mining cartels did prefer black African miners in instances where they could not rely on convict labour because white labour was more costly. Railway construction was unable to fill their labour shortage with convict labour due to the irregularity of supervision because of the scattered sites where the work actually occurred. The fear was that the convicts had a greater chance of escaping in the labour model used by railway supervisors/gangs. From the archives, there is little known about the actual work that went into railway building, however, there is evidence that there were disturbances showing that the employees were not always satisfied with the arrangement. Additionally, there is little documentation that covers

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[136] Purkis, A. J. 1978. 'The Politics, Capital and Labour of Railway-Building in the Cape Colony, 1870 – 1885,' p. 330.
[137] Ibid., p. 331 – 332.

disease and/or injuries of unskilled African male labourers since there was a disinterest in these employees by the institution.[138]

There is a resounding silence in the western archive on the histories of black labourers and Other subaltern groups affected by the introduction of railways within the region. Such is the case in other regions as well such as the Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State. Despite this, the Cape Colony was possibly the more influential player in the early histories of railway construction and development in South Africa. From a civil engineering perspective, the introduction of the 3ft. 6in. steam locomotive gauge changed the trajectory of railways as it became known as the standard for all railways in South Africa. The CGR was also influential on the legal and operational front as many of the policies enforced in the Cape Colony were used as a blueprint in Natal and later in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. The strength of the Cape Colony was particularly supported through British capital. Later in the chapter there will be a discussion on the role of the Rothschild loan on colonial and republican politics and how this dispensation favoured CGR and the Cape Colony.

Following the Tracks laid by NZASM

As a path towards situating the histories of the relationship between space, infrastructure and the people of Tembisa, it is imperative that the history and role of the NZASM in the Transvaal be briefly explored. The NZASM company was established in 1887 with Dutch and German finance following the Anglo-Boer tensions that existed prior and after the South African War (1899 – 1902). These politics of space and power in the settler colony overlapped with the Anglo-German rivalry which was linked to the contestation of resources and the colonisation of tropical Africa.[139] The Anglo-German tensions influenced the division between the British and Afrikaner government in matters relating to South Africa's participation in the Great War. The Afrikaner officials supported Germany, however, due to the power of Anglo white South Africa, the South African military was conscripted to fight alongside the British. Much of the politics relating to the abovementioned conflicts were removed from marginalised and African groups insofar as power was concerned. Nonetheless, the ramifications of the actions informed

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[138] Ibid., p. 323 – 325 & 330.

[139] Van-Helten, J. J. 1978. 'German Capital, the Netherlands Railway Company and the Political Economy of the Transvaal 1886 – 1900.' *The Journal of African History,* Vol. 19, No. 3, p. 369.

by these tensions were felt the hardest by these oppressed groups through conscription, oppression and displacement.

From a global level, the process of industrialisation is coupled with effective transportation, and access to surplus, cheap labour. The mining industry that came to characterise and shape the Transvaal region was no exception. In 1886, the discovery of deep digging in the Witwatersrand region led to the building of the first railway called the Rand Tram in 1890. This name came from the ox-tram, which was a more popular mode of transportation at the time.[140]

With cooperation and support from Paul Kruger and the South African Republic (SAR), NZASM monopolised the Transvaal economy, which developed around gold mining in the Witwatersrand region.[141] NZASM was privately-owned with its headquarters located in the Netherlands. The removed nature of the company's headquarters from the daily dealings of its activities in the region affected its operational decisions. Owing to this, mining companies and other entities criticised it heavily for unjustifiably high tariffs and poor service provision. These were some of the factors behind its nickname: "No Zeal And Slow Motion'.[142] During this time, the railways were used to transport the material, equipment and labour from the periphery of the urban towns. Reliability was an absolute necessity since this new mode of transport was powered by the steam engine rendering it more effective than the ox-wagon, which struggled to accommodate heavier goods and their movement across long-distances.

Central to the SAR's decision to welcome the infiltration of the Dutch and Germans via NZASM into the Transvaal economy was the vision of the Delagoa Bay 'Eastern Line', this railway network would extend into the Mozambique region therefore removing SAR from using trading harbours located in the British territories of the Cape and Natal colonies.[143] The benefits entailed non-reliance on its opponents in the British colony ports of Natal, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town; it also had economic implications since this alternative route to the harbour covered a shorter distance comparatively.

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[140] Pirie, G. 1993. 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance.' *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol. 19, No. 4, p. 716.

[141] Van-Helten, 'German Capital, the Netherlands Railway Company', pp. 370 & 372.

[142] Bothma, J. 1995. 'Centenary of the Delagoa Bay', *Transnet Heritage Library Archive.*

[143] de Jong, R. C. 1996. '"The Iron Road to the Sea": The Pretoria-Maputo Railway, 1895-1995.' *Journal of the Pretorian Historical Association: Old Pretoria Society.* No. 108, p. 4.

The Eastern Line became a massive project for the SAR. It commenced in 1871, but its full completion was only realised in 1894. Part of the delays in its completion emanated from multiple challenges encountered during its construction, which ranged from engineering to diseases. At the beginning of the project, Dutch-speaking labourers were used as construction workers for the Delagoa Bay route. This labour was mostly sourced abroad through Van Hattum Company, a labour-brokering agency. With time, it turned out that they were physically unable to cope with the southern African environment leading to many deaths, especially from malaria.[144] A recorded number of 200 human remains were found in Elands Valley, and are suspected to have been part of the malaria outbreak mortality as well possibly deaths of communities and labourers by lion attacks during the construction of the line.[145] When following the Eastern Line, one observes the presence of multiple game reserves along the route which may have been the source of dangers from attacks from wildlife.

To sustain the project, NZASM had to shift towards using black male African labourers. For the company, this became a beneficial alternative in two ways: Firstly, black labourers were acclimatised to the region and had thus developed the biological immunity to withstand many diseases. Secondly their knowledge and familiarity with the geography was useful in the circumvention of various day-to-day engineering hurdles.

In "B(l)ack-ground and Foreground", Arthur Barker highlights the interdependent and inclusive relationship between the European and black male African employees of NZASM ensuring the successful construction of the 'iron road to the sea'[146] network projects. Barker dismisses the myths that black male Africans were not active participants in the construction of this line and that their contribution to this significant infrastructural body was minuscule. In the same breath, he acknowledges the erased and muted histories of the black male African labourers and displaced communities. He also demonstrated what the arrival and effects of NZASM meant to them as subalterns in terms of displacement and resettlement in the railway camps.[147] Documentation of the archive adopted by NZASM is reflective of a Euro-modernity and its dismissal of bodies which are non-modern and deemed ahistorical. A deeper

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[144] Ibid., p. 6.

[145] Bothma, J. 1995. 'Centenary of the Delagoa Bay', *Transnet Heritage Library Archive*.

[146] The term is adopted from Robert de Jong's article "The Iron Road to the Sea": The Pretoria-Maputo Railway, 1895 – 1995.

[147] Barker, A. 2015. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground.' *Architecture SA*. Issue 72, pp. 33 – 34.

examination and discussion on the pictures used to locate the existence and silences of black bodies during the NZASM tenure is to follow in the next chapter.

Furthermore, apart from the transportation of mining materials, NZASM developed other railway networks that were critical in funnelling labour into industrial and mining centres. Within the Transvaal region, it constructed five railway lines in the period between 1889 and 1897, as shown on Map 2. The first line was the Rand Tram. Completed in 1890, it stretched from Springs to Krugersdorp via Johannesburg. The second line was the Southern Line (1890 – 1893) which extended from Vereeniging to Pretoria. The third line was the Barberton branch-line built between 1894 and 1896. The fourth to be constructed was the Southern-Eastern Line (1894 – 1896), which runs from Elsburg to Volksrust and the last was the Southern-Western Line (1895 – 1897) running from Krugersdorp to Klerksdorp.[148] A route that is significant to note is the Southern Line, particularly the stations located between Elandsfontein (located in contemporary Germiston) and Pretoria, and the close extension stations. Tembisa Township is located along this route and in chapter four there will be a discussion that focuses on effects of railway infrastructure in the spatial planning of black townships during the twentieth century's urbanisation process.
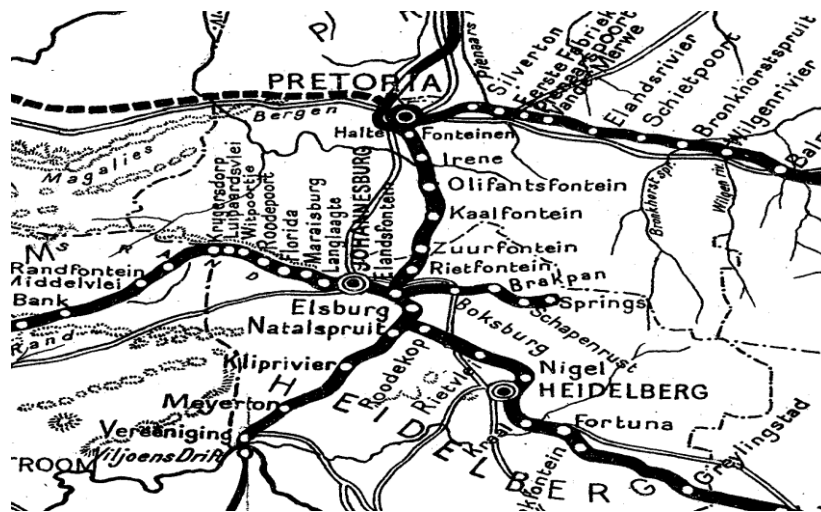
Map 2: Part of a railway map from "In Memoriam NZASM" showing the network of the various railway routes in the Transvaal. The Southern Line is traced between the nodal points (Pretoria – Elandsfontein – Vereneeging)

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[148] NZASM Structures of the Rand Tram and the Southern Line. Robert C. de Jong, in *Restorica*, a magazine of the Transvaal Provincial Museum Service, April 1987 p. 27.

Kruger's Republic, the Rothschild Loan and NZASM

As discussed in the previous section, the Transvaal gold rush undoubtedly and completely altered the economic trajectory of the SAR as influenced by the interdependent relationship between the railway and mining sectors. Oftentimes, the Afrikaner-British rivalry was performed and measured through infrastructural development and territorial occupation in the republics and the colonies. The colonies always had an added advantage due to their direct association with British imperialism and its markets. While it is true that the mining industry was a catalyst towards the economic independence of the SAR, it was challenging for Paul Kruger to attract and secure foreign investment for the republic, particularly with the stagnation of the gold rush leading to a cash flow crisis.[149] Furthermore, the economic depression of 1882 – 1886 worsened the SAR's economy and placed the republic in a huge financial crisis which made it vulnerable to British imperial infiltration.[150]

Railway construction and maintenance required a strong financial arm; unfortunately, the SAR lacked a sufficiently strong enough economy to carry this mammoth project hence its appeal to foreign investment, in this case, from the German banks via NZASM. Kruger's mission to divorce SAR from any links or dependence on the imperial harbours of the Cape and Natal was contingent to the construction of the Eastern Line connecting to the Mozambican harbour. The shares owned by NZASM were fundraised through loans, individual shares of Fl. 1000 at six per cent, from the Berlin stock exchange and banks at the concession that NZASM's rolling-stock and its general machinery was manufactured by Schwartzkopff.[151] This later placed SAR under financial pressure from state debt and fixed charges as the construction process of the Eastern Line was momentarily paused due to disease and geographical difficulties.[152] Despite the vicissitudes in the relationship between the company and the SAR government, it was through NZASM that the SAR secured most of its financial investment from German banks. During this time the European markets lacked confidence in Kruger's

[149] Wilburn, K. 1988. 'The Nature of the Rothschild Loan: International Capital and South African Railway Diplomacy, Politics, and Construction, 1891 – 1892.' *South African Journal of Economic History.* Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 5.

[150] Wilburn, K. 1987. 'Cecil Rhodes, James Sivewright, and Paul Kruger: The Nature of Railway Diplomacy in South Africa, 1890 – 1892.' *Pretoriana: Journal of the Pretoria Historical Society (Old Pretoria Society).* No. 91, p. 47.

[151] Van-Helten, 'German Capital, the Netherlands Railway Company and the Political Economy of the Transvaal 1886 – 1900', p. 373.

[152] Wilburn, K. 'Cecil Rhodes, James Sivewright, and Paul Kruger', p. 48.

government. The Kruger regime was aware of the attractiveness of the Rand mining industry but this potential was not immediately convincing to the German government and European markets alike. Through the intense lobbying of the Berlinger Handelsgesellschaft (BHG), however, German banks and Robert Warschauer, the company was granted a loan initially in 1887 at five per cent interest rate. [153] Below is a table on the original capital investment in NZASM.

NZASM Share Capital Investors	Shares Owned
South African Republic and concessionaries	Fl. 700,000.00
German Banks	Fl. 891,000.00
Labouchere, Oyens and Cie.	Fl. 409,000.00
Total (fixed) Share Capital	**= Fl. 2,000,000.00**

Table 3: Original Share Capital Investment in NZASM

The Rand mines had the potential of establishing a flourishing economy and to protect its interests and foreign investment, the Kruger regime attempted to block the British from the German monopolised economy. In the process towards realising the construction of the Eastern Line, NZASM was involved in negotiations with Edward McMurdo, an American who was the Portuguese concessionaire, on the through-rates agreement connecting their respective trunk lines. As a result of these negotiations, by 1887 the McMurdo line became the only entity allowed penetration into the Transvaal. The McMurdo Concession was however short-lived because of the uneconomical rates negotiated for NZASM which were undermined by the secret agreements between Portuguese and Transvaal officials in favour of NZASM during 1889.[154] For Kruger, the Eastern Line was crucial towards the realisation of economic independence of the republic and despite numerous financial challenges he kept on pushing for various alternative ways of reaching the Delagoa Bay.

Cecil Rhodes, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, shifted his gaze towards the Rand mines after establishing that the hope for a 'Rhodesian Witwatersrand' had faded.[155] Several attempts to tap into the Transvaal mines and economy were made by the CGR, however these

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[153] Ibid., p. 386.

[154] Searle, R. 1987. 'The Story of 'Roos'.' *Pretoriana: Journal of the Pretoria Historical Society (Old Pretoria Society).* No. 91, p. 24.

[155] Wilburn, K. 'Cecil Rhodes, James Sivewright, and Paul Kruger', p. 52.

advances were stymied by Kruger through the enforcement of high tariffs and taxation of goods transported via the railways.[156] This strategy, as adopted by Kruger was twofold, on one hand it was a way for SAR to ease out of its financial pressures and debt, and on the other hand it maintained the competitive advantage of NZASM within the republic. However, the strategy backfired on the Kruger regime – whose motive was to direct more traffic towards the completed Delagoa Bay 'Eastern Line' – and was countered by merchants who travelled from the Cape harbour to the Orange Free State, unloaded their cargo and continued the journey into the Transvaal via the ox-wagons.[157] This counter immunised the merchants from paying the high tariffs and taxations which ultimately affected the Transvaal railway industry negatively and ultimately the ability of NZASM to pay off its loans. The economic woes of the SAR continued to heighten because NZASM and the state lacked the capacity to pay off the loans accumulated specifically for railway construction.

Railway diplomacy during the late nineteenth century became one of the means explored by SAR as a measure to avoid possible state bankruptcy and to also attract foreign investment. The unstable political landscape of the Transvaal made it challenging to attract foreign investment from European markets and this was aggravated by the 1890 collapse of the South American securities.[158] To protect their interests and investment the Advance Syndicate, a group of continental capitalists in the Transvaal who were also shareholders of NZASM, came to Kruger's rescue and loaned the republic £600,350 loan bearing 6% interest with a 1 % commission added for each 6-month renewal.[159] This was just enough to cover the immediate expenses but still failed to attract European investors. Baron Eugene Oppenheim was then appointed by Kruger to go raise a French-based loan. By mid-October 1891 the Oppenheim negotiations fell through as they clashed with the business interests of the newly established National Bank and local business interests, as well as the second class quality of Transvaal Government bonds, among other factors.[160]

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[156] Ibid., pp. 43 & 46.

[157] Martin, P. 2004. 'Railways in South Africa: Historic Highlights, Strategic Evolution and Transformation 1845 – 2002.' Prepared on behalf of *Spoornet*, p. 3.

[158] Wilburn, K. 'The Nature of the Rothschild Loan', p. 6.

[159] Wilburn, K. 'Cecil Rhodes, James Sivewright, and Paul Kruger', p. 48.

[160] Wilburn, K. 'The Nature of the Rothschild Loan', p. 7.

As the economic situation of the SAR endured more pressure, Rhodes was strategically finding ways of encircling the republic and potentially penetrating into its economy. Eckstein and Company were tasked by Rhodes to investigate the possibility of assisting the Transvaal with raising £1-3 million for rail construction with a clause explicitly excluding the Eastern Line construction. Slowly, the Transvaal was loosening its borders after the gold taxation was insufficient to cater for the financial baggage and the fall through of the McMurdo Concession. By 1887, Kruger promised the opening of the Transvaal border for the Cape-OFS line. At this time, railway investment in South Africa was 60.95% greater than that of the mining industry.[161] One of the reasons for such high investment in railways could be that the short term realisation of effective railway transportation was essential for the long term growth and development of the mining industry as well as other infrastructural developments in a rapidly industrialising and urbanising society. An effective railway transportation system would also position and link South Africa favourably with a global market.

The Sivewright Agreement of 1891 was a significant moment of railway diplomacy that eased the political and territorial tensions between the Cape Colony and the SAR. James Sivewright, also known as the Afrikaner Imperialist, was delegated by Rhodes to meet with the Transvaal Executive Council and enquire about the Transvaal railway infrastructural development. The Transvaal Executive Council and Sivewright met on 30 November 1891 and reached an amicable agreement three days later that led to the signing of the Sivewright Agreement on 10 December 1891, this agreement favoured both parties. The agreement consented to the Cape Colony loaning NZASM £900,00.00 at 4% interest towards the completion of the Vaal River-Pretoria line, one of the conditions was that the CGR was to then be granted access to establish its quarters in the Transvaal.[162] None of the money from this loan was to contribute towards the completion of the Eastern Line; however Kruger understood the benefits of having other functional railway networks as a means to grow the SAR economy.

Kruger was comfortable with the terms of the Sivewright Agreement as he wanted to secure a non-British funder to complete the Eastern Line, seeing that the main purpose of this line was to shift away from British imperial hegemony. Rhodes on the other hand had accepted the inevitability of the construction of the Eastern Line and had future plans of eventually absorbing the line. The South African war disrupted the aspirations of both leaders. By 1892

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[161] Wilburn, K. 'Cecil Rhodes, James Sivewright, and Paul Kruger', p. 48.
[162] Wilburn, K. 'The Nature of the Rothschild Loan', p. 8.

the SAR was unable to honour its payment obligations to its contractors as its financial crisis continued to worsen.[163] An unlikely investor, influenced in no small part by Rhodes, came to the rescue of Kruger and his Eastern Line. In January 1892, Rothschild (through its employee Carl Meyer) began investment in the deep level mining companies in the Witwatersrand. Due to the interwoven relationship between railways and the mining industry it came as no surprise that London-based Rothschild was in negotiations with Pretoria regarding both the mining and railway sectors.[164] Rothschild offered SAR a loan of £2 million at £90 at 5% interest, Rhodes came with a counter offer of a loan of £2 million at £100 in 4% railway bonds; both loans came with their respective conditions. Rhodes' offer came with savings of £210,000 but Kruger rejected it, instead there were renegotiations between Rothschild and Pretoria that increased the limit of the loan to £2, 5 million. In his paper Wilburn argues that there are three interpretations of the amount approved and sent through to the Transvaal, with the highest flotation amount reaching close to £3 million.[165]

The Rothschild loan contributed tremendously towards the completion of the Eastern Line and other outstanding expenses pinned to it. Most of the other railway constructions, particularly those along the Southern Line, were developed through the Sivewright Agreement and other loans accrued before and after this moment. Upon the completion of the Eastern Line, Kruger enforced high taxation and tariffs on goods transported via the Natal and Cape harbours therefore creating an uneven competition between these with the Delagoa Bay harbour. These concessions allowed for NZASM to maximise on profit and disgruntled other sectors within the Transvaal. The Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines Railways Committee provided a comparative report in 1897 that discussed the uneven distribution of profits between the various railway lines and problematized the monopolisation of railway transportation by NZASM in the Transvaal:

> "The argument of the committee is not that the Cape or Natal are taxed too much, and the Portuguese too little, but that the basis of the rates is not just to the industry, which already, in other ways, is heavily burdened."[166]

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[163] Ibid., p. 9.
[164] Ibid., pp. 9 – 10.
[165] Ibid., pp. 12 – 14.
[166] Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines, "Mining Industry Evidence and Report: Report of the Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines Committee on Railways" (part 1 in South Africa Archive, Item #46), p. 495.

Through the Sivewright Agreement and the "Solemn Promise" Kruger managed to consolidate the competitive edge of NZASM, while agreeing that the Cape would have an advantage over Natal.[167] Kruger's government founded its railway construction during financial crisis in the republic. However, through compromising on certain positions, such as a non-British investor for the Eastern Line and negotiations with the imperial Cape Colony, Kruger managed to complete the dream of an Eastern Line and tapped into the economic potential of deep digging of the Rand mines.

Post-South African War: CSAR and the case of Poor Whites

The ramifications of the South African War were felt deeply within all spheres of society in the colonies and republics; the mining and transportation industries, despite their rapid development, were not exempt. Building up to the war, the diplomatic relations between the British and Afrikaner governments deteriorated rapidly and the railways were a critical piece within this chess game. With the official outbreak of the war in 1899, the contestations for power of the Rand mines in the Transvaal between the British, Germans and Afrikaners led to the fast disintegration and later dissolution of NZASM in 1901.[168] The final collapse of the Afrikaner republics led to the collapse of several railway companies administered within their regions. By 1902, railway companies such as NZASM, the Orange Free State Government Railways Company and the Pretoria-Pietermaritzburg Railways Company were under British military control and administered as Central South African Railways (CSAR).

The conditions for unskilled and untrained labour recruitment differed for CSAR compared to NZASM. While NZASM's recruitment was focused on responding to disease and climate challenges, CSAR was more fixated on addressing the issue of white poverty after the war. However, an observable common thread is that of imported labour. For NZASM, imported white labour came in the form of Dutch men, while CSAR resorted to the importation of English navvies facilitated by Milner's desire to put "more English blood in the country". Through this, approximately 500 English navvies were absorbed by the CSAR. The navvies campaign was halted by 1903 to make way for the recruitment of 3,000 white labourers.[169] Of

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[167] Wilburn, K. 'Cecil Rhodes, James Sivewright, and Paul Kruger', p. 51.

[168] Van-Helten, 'German Capital, the Netherlands Railway Company and the Political Economy of the Transvaal 1886 – 1900', p. 388.

[169] Pirie, G. 1992. 'White Railway Labour in South Africa, 1873 – 1924.' in Robert Morrell (ed.) '*White but Poor: Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880 – 1940.*' University of South Africa Press, p. 104.

course, the response to white poverty would have unfavourable fiscal implications for the railway industry since white labour cost more than black African labour. This proved to be of secondary importance for the government officials who were in favour of segregationist policies in the urbanisation process and enforced the prioritisation of poor whites through the Inter-Colonial Council's Railway Committee.

Another factor that contributed towards this change in recruitment was the demand for black African labour in the mining industry. Mining managers argued that the retrenchment of black Africans from railway labour would push that labour force to the mines where there was a shortfall of cheap labour. The railway and mining industry had a peculiar relationship but this was one of the instances where friction between the two was demonstrable because the mining industry's financial success was at the expense of the railway industry. Interestingly, both industries preferred black African (sometimes Indian) labour insofar as it amounted to a lot of savings and it had visible output.

An ambiguous 'white labour policy' was adopted by CSAR to track and prioritise the successful recruitment of poor whites into unskilled railway employment. A White Labour Department and Inspectorate was created to protect white employees and their stay in the company post-recruitment. By the end of 1907, an estimated 300 white labourers were absorbed. In 1908, 1,900 white labourers were recruited to replace 2,800 retrenched black African labourers. This alone signalled the downscaling of railway recruitment which directly impacted on the speed at which railway construction was to occur. To attract white labourers, the CSAR provided many incentives over and above the salary. These incentives included housing, free medical aid, supply of coal and an annual second-class ticket for travel, amongst other benefits. Unfortunately, these incentives were the reserve of only the white employees as the 5,000 black African employees never at any stage enjoyed any of these perks.[170] The CSAR was short-lived; it merged with the Cape Government Railways (CGR) and the Natal Railways (NGR) along with the harbour companies, to form SAR&H in 1910. The merger excluded the Delagoa Bay, which belonged to Mozambique.[171]

The early emergence of modernity in South Africa shows that there is a consistent presence of black African bodies within the construction of infrastructure and the moulding of

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[170] Ibid., p. 103 – 108.
[171] Martin, P. 2004. 'Railways in South Africa,' p. 3.

urban sensibility and sociality. However, the government deliberately prioritised the development and modernisation of the white population while stunting the development and suppressing the mobility of the black African population. For instance, in multiple correspondences the engineers and senior managers have reported on the inadequacy of white performance compared to black Africans and of the racial intolerance expressed by the poor white had on working with or doing jobs that were understood as 'black' jobs. The NGR was reluctant to employ white labour; the General Manager described this group as socially undesirable characters who refused to work alongside black African labourers.[172] The racialization of the railway spaces became more apparent as the shift towards a unification of the regions was on the horizon. That was observable through some of the parliamentary debates where race was flagged by a CGR official when discussing the possible tactics to engage the rail-road competition.[173] This infrastructure became a site and tool for modernising the country by placing specific emphasis on a particular racial group over all Other groups.

When considering the case of modern Europe, it was classism and not racialism that categorised who was to receive the underside of modernity. The nature of capitalism in modern Europe meant that even the white population that falls within/beneath a particular class lacks immunity from experiencing the other/underside of modernity. For South Africa, however, the western logic of modernity fails to hold since poor whites were protected from encountering the underside of modernity, on the one side. On the other, the scourge was heavily felt by black Africans and other racial groups who were either deliberately excluded or marginalised from an emerging South African historical consciousness. Despite the intentional exclusion from the fruits of modernity, black Africans cannot be erased from the conversation on modernity especially if white labourers replacing black African labourers are considered to have contributed towards the modernisation of South Africa.

Conclusion

European capital was essential to railway construction in South Africa. One can argue that without this investment, all the railway lines that cut across South Africa would have not existed as soon as they did. Provided we genuinely engage with the depths of the global impact of colonisation and European expansionism. The South African race towards a modern

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[172] Pirie, G. 1992. 'White Railway Labour in South Africa, 1873 – 1924', p. 102.

[173] Pirie, G. H. 1993. 'Slaughter by Steam: Railway Subjugation of Ox-Wagon Transport in the Eastern Cape and Transkei`, 1886 – 1910.' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies.* Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 329.

mechanised form of transportation necessitated a huge injection of 'modern' capital towards its realisation. 'Modern' capital in this context is translated as money controlled through the banking system. By this time western banks had developed sophisticated models to 'create' money and capital and were thus highly influential and wielded a lot of power within and outside of Europe. In the case of the Cape Colony and SAR, the Rothschild loan was particularly important as a source of major financing. During the nineteenth century the Republic and the colony were political rivals, however; capital was used as a mediator to calm these tensions albeit temporarily through the Sivewright Agreement and Solemn Promise.

The Transvaal gold rush of the nineteenth century and the accompanying mining boom led to an agreement between Kruger and Rhodes called the 'Sivewright Agreement'. This agreement essentially outlined the approval from Rhodes, a political and economic ally of Rothschild, for Rothschild to give Kruger a loan that would assist in expediting the completion of the Eastern Line. Rhodes had hoped that the CGR would eventually buy this railway line later.[174] The Rothschild loan had made clauses that forced Kruger to open the borders into the Transvaal thus rendering SAR penetrable. The German monopoly of the economy of the region was now threatened and later dismantled entirely after the South African war.

Inherent in 'modern' capital and the modernisation theory is the deep rootedness of racism and Other(ing). Following the cases of NGR, CGR, NZASM and later CSAR, a common thread linking humanness and the division of labour is observable. Europeans/whites were always considered to be the more skilled and capable employees within the railway companies whereas blacks assumed the lower level tasks that were unappealing to whites. While this may hold historical validity, conceptually the idea of modernity is essentially flawed when approached as a universal ideology that has no room for alternative possibilities. This is the case because in instances such as NZASM blacks are seen to be performing the tasks designated initially to white labourers who were either incompetent or plagued by disease.

The power of 'modern' capital extended as far as the conception of sociality and the social fabric. In the case of Natal a layered racialism was manifest within the construction and use of the railways. The fact that racism stretched beyond just the binary of black and white but was more nuanced within the 'black' groups speaks to the limitations of a universalist

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[174] Ibid., pp. 5ernational Capital and South African Railway Diplomacy, Politics, and Construction 1891 – 1892.' *South African Journal of Economic History.* Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 5.

conception of being modern. The racism of the Indians towards the Africans speaks to the myth of civilising. Indians were considered to be more civilised and modern compared to their African counterparts. This 'civility' or 'modernity' is measured on the scale of whiteness. Markers in this scale range from physical appearance to assimilation, with Africans consistently located at the periphery even on the labour continuum of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled.

Not surprisingly histories of gender during this period are not thoroughly discussed or easily found in literature that has investigated this historical moment. Women, children, youth and the queer remain invisible in the history of 'modern' capital and the sculpting of a 'modern' society. Decolonial scholars argue that this metaphysical structure and conception of modernity is rooted in the Cartesian Self. The Cartesian Self is limiting in imagination and abstraction because it is anchored on the basic ontology of a white European heterosexual man who is a product of the Enlightenment.[175]

Within the Global North-South dialogue, western modernity exposes itself as Janus faced in its refusal to accord the Other the space of conquering the Self and placing themselves within modernity. This is not to say that the Other has the desire to exist within the constructions of western time and space, but rather it is aimed at exposing instead the false promises of western modernity that justifies the barbarity of violence and exploitation as a necessary civilising middle passage. This can be seen practised by all the railway companies in relation to unskilled labour and subaltern communities. Sanya Osha describes this intrinsic contradiction of western modernity as linked to the morass of the unclear logic for hegemonic domination marred in European cultural elitism, secularism and Christian cosmology.[176] Eurocentric institutions of modernity advocate for structures of democracy and the advancement of humankind's relationship with science and ecology at the expense of the subaltern; particularly the subaltern who refuses to assimilate.

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[175] See, Grosfoguel, R. 2012. 'Decolonising Western Uni-versalisms: Pluri-versalism from Aime Cesaire to the Zapatistas. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of Luso-Hispanic World.* Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 88 – 104; Mignolo, W. D. 2007. 'Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-coloniality.' *Cultural Studies: Globalisation and De-colonial Thinking.* Vol. 21, No. 2/3; and Dussel, E. 1996. *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor and the Philosophy of Liberation.* Translated and Edited by Eduardo Mendieta. Humanities Press, New Jersey.
[176] Osha, S. 2011. 'Appraising Africa: Modernity, Decolonisation and Globalisation.' *Philosophy and African Development: Theory and Practice*. pp. 169 – 170.

The archive continues to have a resounding silence on the histories of black African lives during this historical moment but through the cracks and silences, the myth of modernity is slowly being deconstructed. There is a more detailed discussion on the archive and ahistorical Beings in Chapter Three. Through the silences it is clear that the modernisation process was not just technical, economic and scientific. The human factor also played a significant role. When tracking the histories of the iron horse, it is evident that the process of forging the track spine was nuanced with multiple factors informing it. Therefore, the railways themselves cannot be examined simply from an economic or engineering/technical lens alone, the political and social played an equally significant role. And the absence of representation of Other genders within the railway dialogue is also very telling of who the infrastructure was built for and what are the parameters of its consumption and usage.

Chapter Three

Situating the Narrative of the Ahistorical within the Archive

(We begin with history – Nikky Finney)

Introduction

The previous chapter focused extensively on the historical background of railway construction in South Africa and the capital that made its realisation possible. The examined data emphasised the documentation of various institutions linked to the railway industry and the political economy of South Africa before the Union. Most of the data is preserved in the archive and the contents, and sometimes interpretations, found within this archive are considered to be the legitimate passage towards accessing historical consciousness. However, this method is one way, in a pool of alternative possibilities, of accessing the past and if used as a universal it leads to the silencing and erasure of the subaltern. The archive is a space where depending on who is investigating the past houses evidence of the existence of the subaltern in the past but mutes the narrative of this subject and thus relegating the Being to an ahistorical position. This chapter will examine photographs and railway poetry that looks at the encounters of black bodies with railway infrastructure and ways in which historicism silences narratives in the archive.

The exercise of formulating theoretical frameworks to study and understand patterns and behaviours that occur as a result of varied exchanges and encounters is tremendously complicated, particularly when the investigated subject, a human, has many nuanced parts that make the whole. A complex subject continually has aspects of it that are simultaneously unknown and known, and has continuities and discontinuities within itself as it negotiates its external and internal existence.[177] This is true of the investigated black bodies[178] and voices, directly or indirectly affected by railways, whose existence is known only insofar as it supports the ends of colonial white South African governments. Therefore, inasmuch as there will be an

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[177] The 'internal' is understood within this context as the space where the Being/Self constructs its own positionality/identity/politics/gender etc. within the world. The 'internal' is self-reflexive. The 'external' refers to the changes that occur between the "Being/Self" and the external environment, this includes other people/institutions/environment etc.

[178] In this chapter the term 'black bodies' is used to make reference to the physical bodies of black African people as well as organised, institutionalised and structured bodies that represent the views and narratives of this said group.

attempt at weaving a narrative from the silences, the sweeping generalisations should not overshadow the complexity of an individual existence within a collective identity. Mindful of the complexity of both the human subject and theorising history, I argue that the universalism of western modernity and historicism attempts to deny the majority of black Africans access to the past (by extension to historical consciousness) and to their own humanness but fails to do so due to the resistance and subversion from the subaltern group against the imposed status quo. The colonial and segregationist government of South Africa utilised the lack of diverse and plural epistemological imaginings in the universalism of western modernity to cast out black Africans to the periphery therefore justifying the exclusion of black Africans from moulding modernity. However, the presence of black people in the past as active agents of carving out South African modernity cannot be erased despite attempts by the meta-narrative to drown all other alternative narratives and methods of accessing the past.

Seeing "Modernity" through the Lens of NZASM

Chapter two broadly discussed the railway histories and developments of the NGR, CGR, NZASM and CSAR. This section will narrow the focus specifically to NZASM because of its direct link to the Tembisa railways, which is used as a case study for the discussion on rail transportation in urban black townships. NZASM invested towards the financing of the materials and resources necessary for the construction of the railway networks in the Transvaal. Furthermore, it also invested in the documentation of this work through the written and photographed archive. Many studies on NZASM focus on the Eastern Line because of the economic contestation between SAR and the Cape Colony over the Rand mines and political autonomy. After much deliberation and the outcomes from the Sivewright Agreement, railway diplomacy elevated the role and function of the Southern Line as equal in importance for the SAR because it connected the Rand Mine economy to the Cape and Natal harbours. It was the first to connect this economy with the outside world before the completion of the Eastern Line which soon followed. The Southern Line is divided into three railway network connections via the Elandsfontein station in the Transvaal, the Vaal River – Elandsfontein, Elandsfontein – Pretoria and Elandsfontein – Johannesburg; from Pretoria the Southern Line connects with the

Eastern Line, a deliberate plan by NZASM which was supported by both Rhodes and Kruger for different ends.[179]

Apart from just the connection to the Rand Mine economy and supporting the emergence of urban Vereeniging, the Southern Line was a crucial component in the industrialisation of Ekurhuleni (formerly known as the East Rand) and the Johannesburg central business district (CBD). Additionally it served as the base for the spatial planning of townships in the early twentieth century which will be discussed in chapter four. By examining the carefully orchestrated images taken of the construction of the Eastern Line and other railway routes, and the people involved, this section will discuss how these photographs are reflective of the western "invention" of modernity while arguing for a more plural understanding of the concept within settler colonial societies. By using available primary sources for the Eastern Line it may be possible to extrapolate and conjecture on the building of the Southern Line for which little evidence has been unearthed.

The images taken by NZASM during the construction process are highly reflective of the epistemologies transported from Europe that dictated and contrasted what was modern in relation to what was non-modern at the time. This binary and logic was dominant and persisted from colonial, segregationist and intensified in apartheid South Africa, most often used along the divide of whites and non-whites as a determinant of what/who is modernised and civilised. The significance of the term non-white is imperative to flag due to its lack of differentiation when it comes to all the racial groups falling within this umbrella categorisation, keeping in mind that white and European were oftentimes used as interchangeable terms. It presupposes the human-ness of Europeans in contrast to the non-human-ness of the Other whose human-ness can only be legitimated through western assimilation. At the core, lies the logic of coloniality, the myth of civilising the Other and the invention of "modernity".[180] In the 1905 Annual Report of the Native Affairs' Department in the Transvaal, the Native Commissioner of the Central Division, J.S. Marwick, is clear in his categorisations of the civility of black Africans within his allotted district. He categorically states the extents and limitations of the mental and social abilities of the black African communities. His report may have been

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[179] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg. '1887 – 1899: The Buildings, Steam Engines and Structures of the Netherlands South African Railway Company.' 1988. de Jong, R. C.; van der Waal, G. M. & Heydenrych, D. H. *Chris van Rensburg Publications (Pty) Limited on behalf of the Human Research Council.* p. 163.
[180] See, Mignolo, A. 2007. 'Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity.' *Cultural Studies.* Vol. 21, No. 2-3, pp. 155 – 167 & Mignolo, W. D. 2007. 'Delinking.' *Cultural Studies.* Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 449 – 514.

submitted after the dissolution of NZASM and the period after the photographs that will be analysed were taken. However, his report, and the reports of other Native Commissioners in the same Annual Report, remains consistent with the logic of coloniality and provides greater insight on better understanding the reality of community and labour division of the late 1890s and 1900s.

> "Contact with Europeans is having a civilising effect on the natives. European implements and clothing are in use, and civilised habits of life are coming into vogue even in natives. Many of the natives are becoming capable labourers under the tuition of their white masters, though very few acquire the knowledge of trade."[181]

The term "invention" is used as a means to delineate the contested views that exist about the origins of the modern period and the definitions of who is modern or can earn their legitimate positionality within modernity.[182] Another way, in which the term "invention" is consumed, in the context of technological and industrial modernisation, is that the locus of innovation and advanced creativity is framed by western modernity with the Other as passive recipients. This logic, of course, is inherently flawed because it fails to consider the presence and engagement of the Other, in all forms and extensions beyond just consuming. The existence of a modern Being coexists with the Being which is not or cannot be modern. The same logic is applied to the axis of the historical and the ahistorical Being. The photographs preserved by NZASM depict an orchestrated and choreographed immortalisation of an historic moment for railways in South Africa and to an extent the independence of SAR. One observes a clear outline of hierarchies demonstrated using an intentional backdrop of traditionality – the non-modern and ahistorical Being, the black male African – versus the modernising – the modern and historical Being, the European officials. Within this context the blackwomen are located at the periphery of the periphery margins.

Arthur Barker published an article that analysed NZASM photographs during the late nineteenth century in the SAR; most of the photographs used in this section are taken from this publication. His main focus was on the connectedness and camaraderie between the NZASM employees despite the existence of hierarchical rankings. He further highlights the rigid borders

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[181] National Archives Repository, TAB (Tshwane), GOV LEER (GEN 44/06), vol. 181, Annual Native Affairs' Department Annual Reports for the Year Ended 30th June 1905, 1906/01/15, p. 37.
[182] Chakrabarty, D. 2011. 'The Muddle of Modernity.' *The American Historical Review.* pp. 663 – 675.

of the 'master' and 'servant' narrative which are easily observable via the structuring of power in the visuals.[183] Various aspects of his observations are valid and important to consider. However, he offers a rather oversimplified outlook which obscures wider epistemological implications that are represented through these photographs. Consideration of the epistemological underpinnings is important particularly because the events captured in the photographs were choreographed. He emphasises the fact that the male European employees of NZASM tended to get along better with the black male African labourers than with their male Afrikaner colleagues. The male Afrikaners were described by the Dutch employees as 'corrupt, lazy, dirty, know-alls, drunkards', on the one hand. On the other, the black male African labourers were referred to as 'children of nature requiring their sympathy and education, albeit with a little patience, so that they could become valuable workers for the company'.[184]

The labels used demonstrate the mission to civilise the inferior Being who is equated to a child, alongside the competition that exists between the two European counterparts. An added nuance between the white Afrikaners and Dutch employees is linked to the hierarchies of the labour structure. During the mineral revolution period,[185] it was common practice for mining and railway corporations to import white skilled labour while simultaneously creating space for South African white unskilled labour. The compensation differed between the two creating classism but the labour regulations and benefits for white unskilled labour far surpassed the provisions accorded to the black African counterparts.[186] The human-ness of the male Afrikaner was treated as a given hence the judgement and condemnation of their behaviour but in the same breath the logic of coloniality persisted because the assumption of these Dutch men remained that whiteness coming from Europe remains better and more pure than whiteness rooted elsewhere outside the continent. The black male African was approached

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[183] Barker, A. 2015. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground.' *Architecture SA*. Issue 72, pp. 33 – 34.

[184] Ibid., p. 34.

[185] See, Richardson, P. & van Helten, J. J. 1984. 'The Development of the South African Gold-Mining Industry, 1895-1918.' *The Economic History Review, New Series*. Vol. 37, No. 3, pp. 319 – 340; Pirie, G. 1992. 'White Railway Labour in South Africa, 1873 – 1924.' in Robert Morrell (ed.) '*White but Poor: Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880 – 1940.*' University of South Africa Press, pp. 101 – 114; & Purkis, A. J. 1978. 'The Politics, Capital and Labour of Railway-Building in the Cape Colony, 1870 – 1885.' PhD Thesis submitted at the University of Oxford.

[186] See, Richardson, P. & van Helten, J. J. 1984. 'The Development of the South African Gold-Mining Industry', p. 321.

more as a Being that still needed training into civilisation and human-ness and to use Immanuel Kant's description this Being is still in a 'state of self-imposed immaturity'.[187]

The universality of colonial logic does not consider the presence of black bodies in "modern" spaces as ends in and of themselves but instead treats them as cogs in a system with the potential of becoming human through assimilation. This narrative is consistent with the Enlightenment ideology that obscures the continuities and discontinuities of modernity emanating from the histories of the Other. Dipesh Chakrabarty describes this as the muddle of western modernity.[188] Here, the black male African labourers are not engaged as contributors to the industrialising process of erecting railway tracks and towards the success of the company. But rather, the industrialising process entailing training and tutelage is seen as the vehicle through which black Africans can attain the status of 'modern' beings. This is disingenuous since these labourers were able to fill a crucial gap that enabled the completion of the construction process after malaria caused the death of many imported Dutch labourers, especially those who were working along the Eastern Line. The photographs below illustrate the black male African labourers' encounter with western modernity (in the years preceding the South African war and the years immediately after) within the vacuum of coloniality as twofold; as a cultural and infrastructural phenomenon.

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[187] Williams, G. 2018. 'Kant's Account of Reason' *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), Accessed Online: https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/kant-reason/.

[188] Chakrabarty, D. 2011. 'The Muddle of Modernity.' *The American Historical Review.* pp, 667 -668.
The muddle of (western) modernity that sees itself having qualifications such as pre- or early modernity, a periodization alternatively known as the late medieval, as an approach to conceal the continuities and discontinuities of Western modernity that refuses to have its origins in histories linked to South Asia and the Mughal empire. These discontinuities can also be traced with other histories from regions outside western Europe that have been equally influential in the advancement of humankind over the Self and the external world.

Picture 2: Image taken 1895 of NZASM personnel at Maraisburg Station; Picture 3: Kaapmuiden Station on the Eastern Line 1893 - from Pretoria to Delagoa Bay.[189]

The cultural aspect is shown through the contrast of the attire between the African labourers and the European officials. Cultural assimilation, as demonstrated in the photographs, was also enforced through the dress code of the African labourers. In Picture 2, one observes the semi-clothed black African labourers who occupy the lowest ranks within the company. Some of these black African labourers may have been newer members of the company. Hierarchy and power is demonstrated slightly differently from Picture 3, in Picture 2 the semi-clothed black African labourers are shown as seated and not possessing power or influence whilst those individuals with a more solid sense of belonging to the company are shown standing. In the same photograph (Picture 2), there are black African employees who are dressed like the European officials. According to de Jong, most of these clothes were "hand me downs" and "had seen better days".[190] The African employees that dressed like the European officials were higher in the ranks within the company and possessed a level of power over the black African labourers in the lower echelons hence their position of standing over the semi-clothed colleagues while fully clothed. Picture 2 and Picture 3 were taken directly at the railway stations and are more linked to the ranking of employees. While it is easier to differentiate between the black African labourers and each group's proximity to power, it is difficult to identify which white employees are the skilled or unskilled employees.

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[189] Barker, A. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground' p. 32 & 35.
[190] Barker, A. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground.', p. 34.

Picture 4: Elandsfontein Station personnel, ca. 1895; Picture 5: Woning at Elandspruit[191]

This section engages pictures with a recurring theme of the modern juxtaposed with the traditional. Furthermore there are two demonstrable structures presented in the photographs, the railways made of brick and mortar, and the thatched huts where the labourers stayed in their camp. Due to the nature of the building materials of the infrastructure, the railway stations are a permanent site and the huts are a temporary site. The imprint of permanent railway structures speaks not only to the permanency of modernity on the geography of the region but also to social changes directly influenced by this change. Additionally, the orchestration of the photographs also informs and categorises the belonging of black and white bodies.[192] There is a domination of white bodies next to the railway infrastructure whereas there is an overwhelming presence of black bodies in the pictures near the thatched and reeded huts. This can be read as intentionally locating and naturalising certain bodies within specific spaces and infrastructures and constructing their sense of belonging.

For instance, in Picture 3, during the construction of the Eastern Line two black African labourers are depicted pushing a European official along the track next to the Kaapmuiden station while the other European officials hover over the black African labourers while standing on the platform. During the late nineteenth century electrification of railway transportation had not yet been developed and introduced and often animal (oxen) and labourers were used to test the functionality and measurements of the track as demonstrated in Picture 2.[193] This frame alone contextualises the varying hierarchical and power divisions that

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[191] Barker, A. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground' p. 33 & 35.

[192] In this chapter the term 'white bodies' is used to make reference to the physical bodies of European people as well as organised, institutionalised and structured bodies that represent the views and narratives of this said group.

[193] Christie, R. 1978. '"Slim Jannie" and the Forces of Production: South African Industrialisation 1915 – 1925.' *Collected Seminar Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies.* Vol. 22, pp. 100 – 108.

existed among the employees of the company. White employees are also shown as belonging and consumers of the space whilst the black labourers are associated with working in the space. Not only does the picture demonstrate the difference in racial hierarchies, especially in regard to technology and development, the posture of the European official pushed down the track exudes a sense of pride in the engineering feat achieved. From the photographs, Maraisburg, Elandsfontein and the Vereeniging station formed part of the Southern Line while Kaapmuiden, Machadodorp and Elanspruit were joined to the Eastern Line. The Southern Line mostly boasts photographs of the physical infrastructure of the rail tracks, stations and buildings and focuses less on the social or residential settlements of the employees and the surrounding regions. This could be linked to the source of the capital for the building of each main line with the Eastern Line appealing more towards the European gaze while investors for the Southern Line are less concerned with some of these constructions of Africa due to their knowledge of the region and the people. Constructions of the Southern Line were funded through a loan of £300,000 from the Cape Colony and a creation or image of "Africa" played a minimal role for investors whereas the Eastern Line was dependent on European funding thus capturing both the infrastructure and people as becoming 'civilised'.[194] However, what remains common is the orchestration of power in all the pictures since it was still the same company carving the narrative of railway heritage in the SAR.

Pictures 2 through to 5 highlight black Africans as employees engaged in labour while semi-clothed with the exception of Elandsfontein station where they were clothed in old overalls. A pertinent observation perverse in all the pictures is the manner in which dress and posing are used to reinforce the stereotypes of black masses and white individuation. The black African labourers are grouped together in the pictures and what can be read from such a deliberate arrangement of posturing is the stereotyping of a black mass that lacks differentiation, black African labourers are captured all dressed similarly and posing in the exact same position therefore denying the individuality of each. Whereas the white labourers and officials are captured dressed differently from their colleagues with each pose reflecting individuality and uniqueness, with the exception of Elandsfontein station where the white individuals are shown to be wearing clothes that almost depict uniformity and the individual

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[194] de Jong, R.C.; van der Waal, G.M. & Henydenrych, D.H. 1988. *1887 – 1899: The Buildings, Steam Engines and Structures of the Netherlands South African Railway Company.* Chris van Rensburg Publication (Pty) Limited on behalf of the Human Sciences Research Council, p. 99.

that is differentiated from the group is the station manager. Despite the exception in dress for the black African labourers in Elandsfontein, what remains common is the representation of sameness of black African labourers through the lens of a black mass. Throughout all the pictures engaged in this section, the individuality and assertiveness of the European official is consistently emphasised therefore suggesting that the targeted audience was from Europe. Because these pictures are choreographed, a reason informing an immortalisation of such a moment may be that, before assimilation, black African labourers can never fully belong to the space and have to prove themselves as malleable to learning from the European. Therefore, the photographs demonstrate how the physical appearance of the employees themselves was used as a metaphor to differentiate between the traditional and modern Being.
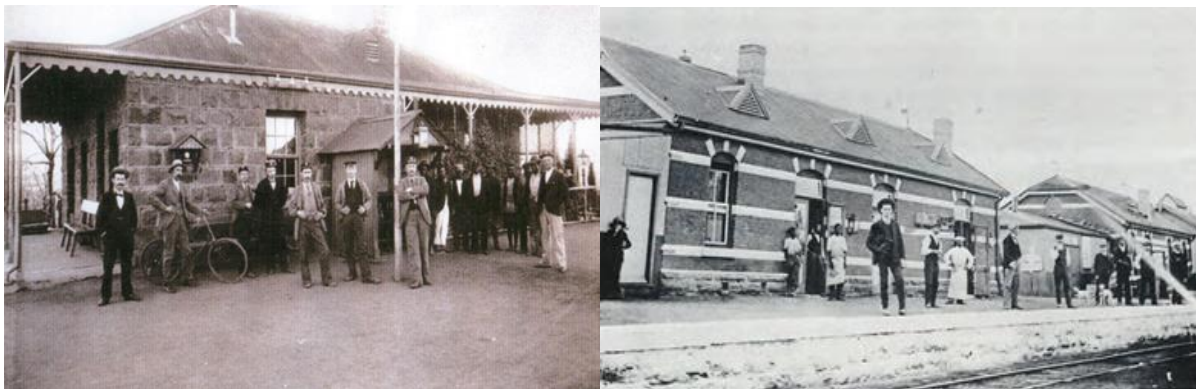
Picture 6: François Felix van der Rijst, station master of Machadodorp and Waterval-Onder (1890-1900) with black and white employees[195]; Picture 7: Vereeniging Station photographed in 1904[196]

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[195] Barker, A. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground' p. 32.

[196] de Jong, R. C.; van der Waal, G. M. & Heydenrych, D.H. '1887 – 1899: The Buildings, Steam Engines and Structures of the Netherlands South African Railway Company.' p. 164.

Picture 8: Black workers under white supervision constructing new footings for the flooded Kaap River Bridge; Picture 9: Black African labourer preparing the river bed for the construction of new footings for the Kaap River Bridge[197]

Pictures 6 and 7 are slightly different from the earlier discussed set of pictures because here black African people are a smaller group and are captured clothed in unique/different attires thus directly shifting from the "black mass" stereotype argument. However, the "black mass" stereotype is instead replaced by the myth of civilising the Other. There is a semblance of humanisation of the black African individuals present in these pictures represented through the sense of dress assimilating the European culture or fashion. Black Africans are shown in these pictures as individually unique, but, most importantly as occupying employment positions within the company which differ from those who are labourers for the physical construction of the railway infrastructure. From the Vereeniging Station it can be deduced that one of the black African employees was a cook or assistant for the white chef who also features in the picture. Despite this attempt at promoting the myth of civilising the Other, by way of absorption into European culture and employment outside of physical labour, the racial hierarchy is maintained.

Firstly, there are very few black African individuals represented within this "civilised" cohort and secondly these selected few individuals are placed in a common position in the picture where they are seen to be in the background whereas the European individuals in the same pictures are scattered. Assessing the hierarchies illustrated in Picture 6 and 7 contrasted with that of Pictures 2 to 5, it can be deduced that hierarchies of employment rankings were

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[197] Barker, A. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground' p. 33 & 34.

not just drawn along racial lines since there was differentiation among black African employees even within the category of unskilled work. Black African employees working in stations, workshops or as supervisors are represented as receiving better treatment than those who were employed as construction labourers of the infrastructure. Through the pictures, this representation is highlighted through dress code and the physical posture. An interesting observation from Pictures 2 through to 7 is how the position of standing and sitting of black African employees shows the various levels of humanisation of each individual. The black African employees in Picture 2, 6 and 7 are not only shown dressed in "formal" attire but the pattern is structured such that they are captured standing as opposed to the other black labourers who form part of the "black mass" who are consistently sitting when photographed in the infrastructural space of railway stations. Differentiation of black African employment rankings is represented through attires as well as numbers since fewer black African individuals could assume rankings higher than the construction labourer. Consider the difference in representation of black African employment by way of clothing by comparing picture 6 and 7 with Picture 8 and 9.

As mentioned already, black African employees in Picture 6 and 7 are shown to be fully dressed in clothes emulating those of European employees while Picture 8 and 9 reverts to the semi-clothed and traditional attire associated with construction labourers. Another important point of consideration is the intentional association of the surrounding environment/space as an indicator of belonging. There is an overwhelming presence and dominance of white employees along the physical infrastructure of the railways such as the stations/workshops and tracks with the opposite being true for black African employees as shown in Picture 8. Space is used to separate the modern and non-modern Being, for instance in Picture 8 and 9 the geographic space shown is raw/natural (untouched by civilisation/modernisation as yet) with an overwhelming presence of black African employees shown semi-dressed in what may be considered "traditional wear". The presence of white employees in Picture 8 is that of overseeing the transitional process towards modernisation/civilisation as there are remnants of tools/materials showing that constructions (read also as change) are underway. The link of using the surrounding environment as a backdrop for illustrating the process of civilisation is shown as well in the residential camps that were occupied by the employees of NZASM.

Picture 10: Camp of NZASM personnel, most likely at Komatipoort on the Eastern Line[198]

Picture 11: White NZASM and black labourers at their camp[199]

In Pictures 10 and 11, everyone is fully clothed; however, hierarchy is demonstrated through situated-ness (either at the front or back in the frame), seating and standing and as well as through the type of garments worn while this photograph was taken. When closely examining picture 11, it is observed that black Africans who were not in higher positions within the company were dressed more casually and placed towards the far ends or at the back. Those who were higher were dressed more formally and were positioned closer to the European officials at the centre of the frame. An assumption that can be deduced from this photograph is that the closer the black African labourer's position to the centre and white officials the greater the assimilation into whiteness, particularly within the working site. Not all the photographed

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[198] Barker, A. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground' p. 32.
[199] Barker, A. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground' p. 32.

archive was reflective of such sequencing; however, the hierarchical structure was always clearly shown. Picture 10 has positioned the black Africans as part of the background with indistinct faces while the white officials occupy the centre of the frame. The shelter accommodating black African people is shown to be 'traditional' and very temporary as opposed to the residences occupied by white officials which were made of brick and were more permanent, see Picture 12 and 13. Through closer inspection of the shelters occupied by white officials it is observed that there is a presence of a single black African servant in the background. This is different to the case of black African camps whereby more white individuals occupy the space as central figures in the frame.

Picture 12: A group of NZASM officials in front of the hut of the district engineer at KM 16, Komatipoort, in 1893; Picture 13: A semi-clothed black African assistant with Caretaker on KM 150 area.[200]

From the evidence provided from picture 11 the presence of blackwomen at the camp cannot be denied. However, there exist no written records of what role these blackwomen played and the nature of their association with the company. Scholars such as de Jong who have dedicated a lot of time towards research on NZASM have admitted to the absence of written or oral histories on blackwomen. The narrative and role of these blackwomen is unknown and it would be necessary for specialised research to be conducted to excavate the narrative of those muted in the archive by following the silences of this past. In the later decades (1920s) under the administration of SAR&H's Department of Publicity, blackwomen began to feature in postcards as 'harmless and exotically-costumed anthropological' and unchanging subjects

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[200] Barker, A. 'B(l)ack-ground and Foreground' p. 34 & 35.

(existing outside of time and space) that can be studied in together with the 'empty' land ready to be filled with railway infrastructure that can cut across time and space by providing an experience of a 'then' and 'now' for the European tourist.[201] Blackwomen may have been represented within rural spaces for the European gaze in the SAR&H adverts; however, they were also engaged in migration using railways and were not just passive recipients of the infrastructure piercing their social and economic lives. Drawing from other railway histories that look at railway labour, such as the case of Natal, women are shown to migrate together with their husbands close to the railway construction zones. As a method of survival in these new environments, women would work smaller and informal jobs on farm fields, domestic work or selling at the market.[202] The reasons for this migration vary from one context to another; in the case of Natal migration was enforced through indentured labour and in the Transvaal reasons may vary from displacement to hut taxations. Another silence and erasure that is observable is the absence of white women in most of the photographs taken. NZASM, as well as CSAR, have written documentation on white gangers who often occupied the countryside and migrated with their wives and nuclear family. Most of the records on the gangers exist not because of the railway companies but through the documents or records from the South African Church Railway Mission (SACRM).[203] Ironically, SACRM was founded on capital that was fundraised in London in 1899 to cater for the needs and wellbeing of white communities located in isolation outside the big towns.[204]

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[201] Foster, J. ''Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always Known'?' pp. 675 – 676.

[202] Heydenrych, D. H. 1986. 'Indian Railway Labour in Natal, 1876 – 1895: The Biggest Indian Work Force in the Colony.' *Historia.* Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 11 – 20.

[203] Pirie, G. 1993. 'Railway Ganging in southern Africa, c.1900-37.' *The Journal of Transport History.* Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 65.

[204] Ibid., pp. 64 – 66.

Picture 14: Blackwomen in the Transkei with the train in the background[205]

The photographs and their orchestration speak to the western memory museum[206] and its conceptions of historical consciousness. As highlighted by Hlengiwe Dlamini "… photographs are subject to multiple interpretations, especially those taken by colonialists with their own agenda in depicting Africa in a particular ideological frame. [She] argue[s] that illustrative material, particularly virtual material in the form of photographs, can add value to the contents of historical research by making them both intersecting and comprehensive but they must be complemented with alternative data."[207] Maintaining the same logic as that applied by Dlamini, I argue that the process of modernity is multifaceted and plural in its manifestation. Many historians who look at the railway histories of colonial and segregationist South Africa tend to lean towards the grand historical moments and focus less on the cultural and social aspects,

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[205] Foster, J. 2003. ''Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always Known'?: the SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910 – 1930.' *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 657 – 680.

[206] The term 'western memory museum' is adopted from Susan Sontag in her article 'Regarding the Torture of Others' *New York Times.* Online https://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/23/magazine/regarding-the-torture-of-others.html.

[207] Dlamini, H. P. 2017. 'Photographs as Complementary Sources of the History of Swaziland: The Case of the Visual Images of the Makers of Swaziland's Pre-Independence Constitution.' *South African Historical Journal.* Vol. 69 No.3, pp. 378 – 379.

particularly of the subaltern and their interaction with the early stages of modernity. This may be informed by the current state of the railway archive and its bias. Dlamini is correct in stating that in instances where gaps exist in history, photographs are good tools towards a better understanding of the past. The problem, however, with this methodological approach is that it is premised on the assumption that the alternative data or history available is not exclusionary to the ahistorical.

Contesting the very constructions or conceptualisation of historicism becomes important in this case as the ahistorical are clearly shown in the archive yet their own agency is overshadowed by the dominant narrative of the railway companies and government. While theories are insufficient a tool to fully grasp the world and the contents therein, they do allow one to momentarily follow certain observable patterns and ruptures that illuminate a better grasp or understanding of the subject. In the case of the NZASM employees, the histories of the black male African labourers are unknown over and beyond their physical presence within the photographs. Their thoughts about their interaction and exchange with the space, infrastructure and, Afrikaner and Dutch employees remains unknown thus meaning my engagement with the photographs is assumptive and can only stretch as far as the known histories. Within mainstream history literature there are few, if any, documented accounts of the thoughts and opinions of the black African labourers and their thoughts regarding working with an infrastructure that has such heavy economic influence in a politically volatile environment preceding the South African war and their experiences during the war. Further research can be conducted to explore other alternative platforms such as African publications and newspapers to gather whether or not the black African labourers were captured since it is difficult to locate within the western archive.

Railway Infrastructure as a Metaphor

As reiterated throughout earlier sections, the influence of the mining industry on railway development is undeniable. The entire political economy of SAR was altered by both the discovery of gold and the railway network expanding from its centre. Malcom Mitchell links the railway systems to migrant labour and describes it as a "five-finger system, with the palm of the hand at the Witwatersrand, the fingers to Maputo, Durban and the three Cape ports".[208]

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[208] Mitchell, M. 2014. 'A brief history of transport infrastructure in South Africa up to the end of the 20th century: early days of Railways and Harbours.' *Civil Engineering: Infrastructure.* p. 75.

Migrant labour may not be the focal interest of this study, however, many poems that articulate the experiences of black communities and their encounter with railways always draw from the origins of migrant labour and its ramifications. This section will examine some of the poetry written in the earlier years of the twentieth century as one of the ways of locating the subaltern's narrative in railway histories. While the pictures examined earlier focused on the late nineteenth century, the poetry cuts across various decades starting from the late nineteenth century well into the twentieth century. Thus making it more challenging to fully grasp the specific historical context of each poem, however, the essence of the influence of the railways is nonetheless clearly articulated.

Similar to the previous section, the voice of the subaltern in poetry is highly gendered and tends to exclude the accounts of blackwomen and the queer. Part of this exclusion is influenced by the nature of the migrant labour systems and its relationship with the railways. However, if statistics were to serve us correctly, the presence of blackwomen in locations within close proximity to urban or industrial spaces is clearly marked, see for example the *Statistics and Census of Native Population of the SAR 1897*.[209] Mobility and migration of blackwomen, if at all different, may have followed the same process as that of black men. Laurence Wright in 'Third World Express: trains and "revolution" in Southern African poetry' provides a detailed analysis of the symbolism of railways within poetry and how it manifests the political position of black African communities. Using literary analysis, Wrights tracks the various political and social dimensions of railway infrastructure and individual encounters with modernity.[210] Two particular poems stand out within the historical context directly linked to the migrant labour system and will be examined for this section; the first is Demetrius Segooa's "The Train" and the second is B.W. Vilakazi's *Woza Nonjinjikazi* (Come! Monster of Steel). Both poems are a translation to English from a vernacular language therefore the possibility that some meaning and/or symbolism may be obscured exists but that will not form part of our inquiry. For the purpose of supporting the argument of locating the subaltern within the archive, only the relevant excerpts from the article will be engaged. Below is Segooa's "The Train" (2008):

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[209] Refer to Annexure A.
[210] Wright, L. 2008. 'Introduction' in Wright, L. (ed.) *Stimela: Railway Poems of South Africa.* Echoing Green Press, pp. 3 – 4.

I am the centipede, rusher with a black nose,

drinker of water even from the witches' fountains,

and who do you say could bewitch me?

I defeat the one who eats a person [the sun], and also the coal

     black darkness

where beasts of prey drink blood day and night.

I am the centipede, mighty roarer with an inward roar.

At home they say I am lost to them –

No sheltered child, I am the centipede that praises the vlei;

Hunger does not delay me

Nor am I hindered by sore feet,

But the mountains, children of the wilderness, they delay me

They exact a price and I pay it.

From a literary perspective Segooa's poem is categorised as a praise poem.[211] One highlighted point of discussion includes the acknowledgement of the physical presence of the railways and linking it with the vocabulary associated with the African ancestral realm or spirituality. This is achieved in two ways; firstly through the structural use of praise poetry, which is often passed through oral repertoire and used to acknowledge ancestors, and secondly through the imagery used to describe the essence and power of the railway infrastructure as supernatural.[212] In this poem, the railway is described as a powerful, surreal and sinister object which intrigues the poet (Segooa). The described and imagined power of the railways in this poem speaks as well to the encounter with western modernity and infrastructural development and how an individual from an African community may have reconciled with this geographic alteration. Furthermore, attention is drawn to the level at which western modernity encounters traditionality through tapping into the cyclic time constructions, common in many African societies, thus making the impersonal railway space more accessible to the imagination and world view of this particular African community.[213] Segooa tackles the issue of migrant labour by illustrating the power and resilience of the railways by stating that it does not get "hindered by sore feet". Most black Africans who journeyed to the mining epicentres oftentimes walked

[211] Wright, L. 2010. 'Third World Express: Trains and "Revolution" in Southern African Poetry.' *Literator.* Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 6.

[212] Ibid., p. 6.

[213] See, Ramose, B.M. 1998. 'The Philosophy of Ubuntu and Ubuntu as a Philosophy,'in Coetzee, P.H. & Roux, A. P. J. (eds.) *The African Philosophy Reader.* Routledge: Great Britain, pp. 274 – 275.

to the mining districts or to railway branches connecting them to these areas.[214] Railway lines were seldom constructed close to the villages.

Here, the power of the infrastructure is compared to the limitations of the human body, therefore linking the discussion to the supernatural imagining of the railways. Having an understanding of the nature of railways and their interaction with black African communities in the countryside, the persistence and undying movement of the railways can be linked with 'drinking the blood day and night' of the labourers that may be working on the trains or those transported to their place of work. Most of the work associated with the migrant labour system is often described as consuming and physically arduous for the black African labourer thus having an effect of eating away at their physical well-being. Unlike Kruger and Rhodes, the imagining and engagement of the railway infrastructure is not directly linked to its economic use and influence on political diplomacy or conflict. While Vilakazi (2008) may share a similar captivation by the magnificence of the railway infrastructure, he is more vocal about the economic influence of the railways and its ramifications on black communities, particularly those caused by the migrant labour system.

Vilakazi's poem provides a more historical account of the encounter of the railways with African communities. The railways are described as a disruptor to the common agrarian economy and way of life causing various economic and social changes for the villages. Throughout the poem there is a consistent binary drawn between the introduction of the modern world and its engagement with the countryside via railway infrastructure. In the first two lines, the poet has a two-pronged reaction towards the railways as he describes the infrastructure as a 'monster made of steel' and as a 'prancing dancer'. There is a certain level of delicacy that the poet is drawn to regarding the movement of the train, he appreciates its art and ability to manoeuvre geographic space. However, he simultaneously recognises its hardness through the material used to build the train, steel. The train is viewed by Vilakazi as a 'monster' because of its role in transporting black men away from the villages to the mines thus destroying the social fabric of the affected communities.

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[214] Pirie, G. H. 1993. 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance.' *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Taylor and Francis. Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 713 – 730.

Come, you monster made of steel,
You prancing dancer of the roads
Who races on your double tracks
Clamped with iron braces!

You curve and climb, descend and wind
Across the uplands and the plains.
Yet you who snatched our fathers' fathers
Away from home and family,
Are deaf to prayers for news of them;
Ignoring questions, all you do
Is tear on faster and faster still.

O, go away, you timeless sun
That never once revealed to us,
Whose skins are black,
That hidden store of gold
Which now we see bestowing wealth
On peoples everywhere on earth,
While we, the sons of Africa,
Can only stare, our thick lips gaping!

Come kindly dusk and usher in the night! –
Already I hear the shrilling pipes
Sounding like the water-kelpies
Vanishing in the flow of the Thukela.
I hear the Vendas and the Tshopis
Loudly singing songs of love,
Bringing to mind the carefree lovers
Who low like grazing milch-cows –

Those whose colour is black and white,
Who stray across the African plains.
I listen as the earth resounds
To stamping feet that stimulate a dance,
Reminding me of Mameyiguda
On Durban's open spaces.
I hear so many strange new chants
Unlike the Mfolozis' clans!

O, go away, you steely monster!
Why must you arrive so soon
When I, at the moment, am lost in thought
And wish that I could hide myself
At home among the mielie-stalks,
Covered with cobs, surrounded by pumpkins;
For there I should never be disturbed
By bustling crowds of chattering people
Passing noisily on their way:
I see them at dawn, I see them at dusk –
At sunrise and sunset they pass me

Reference to the 'hidden store of gold' directly links the migrant labour system discussed with the Witwatersrand mining industry. The discovery of the goldfields in the Transvaal coincided with an international market that highly demanded and consumed the natural mineral. Unfortunately, due to conquest and colonisation resulting in oppression, segregation and racism, the wealth derived from the goldfields did not benefit black African communities. This is highlighted by Vilakazi in stanza three. The train is acknowledged as a facilitator in the growth of the capitalist economy as well the exclusion of black African communities from the benefits of modernity. Not only are railways seen as tools towards an exclusionary economy but they are also associated with the swallowing of many black men for multiple generations. While this can be corroborated with data from migrant labour recruitment agencies that acted as the 'middleman' between the Chamber of Mines and railway administrators there is a silence regarding the movement of blackwomen using the railway infrastructure.[215] The vocabulary used places blackwomen outside of the histories of interaction between space, people and infrastructure. For instance words such as 'sons', 'fathers' and 'Mameyiguda' make direct reference to men and there is little evidence to suggest a possible response to the encounter of modernity from blackwomen or girls.

Reactions to railway infrastructure were not homogenous among all the black African communities. Other communities welcomed the infrastructural development and were more open to interacting with modernity on the terms provided by those who introduced the technology to the region. Vilakazi highlights '[…] the Vendas and the Tshopis' as 'loudly singing songs of love'; this is to show that the railway infrastructure did not only invoke different senses and emotions among individuals, even the black communities experienced multiple reactions and feelings towards this technology. It can be appreciated here that the poet has an awareness of the different ways by which railway infrastructure affected and was received by certain societies. Furthermore, from a historical perspective it shows how various 'tribal' groups were not moving in unison regarding the formation of Bantustans and the infrastructure associated with linking villages as labour reservoirs.[216] Mseleku makes reference to this conflict based on ethnic divides in the poem "TransBophuta-Venda-Bomber Express" by illustrating how the first established Bantustans of Transkei, Bophutatswana and Venda was birthed through a political caesarean and the essence of the poem was mocking the colonial

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[215] Pirie, G. H. 1993. 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance.' *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Taylor and Francis. Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 713 – 730.
[216] Ibid., p. 716.

railway lines of the Trans-Karoo and Trans-Natal.[217] Due to references such as 'Durban', 'Mameyiguda' and 'Mfolozi clan' one can deduce that the poet is making reference to amaZulu. Therefore, the contrast is drawn between amaZulu, baPedi and maTsonga tribes and their responses to the new political order; this of course is not to say that the poet only recognises those as the only groups within the region.

There is nostalgia in the manner that the poet speaks of the village and the sense of belonging within that space. This is pitted against the continual movement and non-homeliness of the train. The vocabulary chosen to describe the village directly touches on villages as self-sustaining environments; this is achieved through descriptions and association of food and water as forming part of village livelihood. Juxtaposed with the mining industry, the poet seeks to contest the notion of migrant labour as a form of economic livelihood for many black families, particularly those still living in the countryside. The poet also makes use of onomatopoeia to differentiate the two spaces; the villages are a place of peace, silence and belonging, while the trains are accompanied by displacement, noise and unsettlement. In a strange way, the poem also speaks of how memory and remembrance has been affected through the permanence of railway infrastructure and the noise of its imminent power and the temporality of the black African Being who comes in contact with it. The imprint of railways is engraved through the permanent infrastructure within the geographic space while the memory of the fathers taken into the mining migrant labour system fades since there is no news of them from the time of their departure.

From the two poems, it is clear that there is a certain way in which the encounter with western modernity through railway infrastructure, in all its forms and extensions, has altered the lives of black Africans. Through poetry, there is access into black African voices that are peripheralised or muted within the physical archive. Here the voices are not necessarily of those who laboured during the construction of the railways, instead, it highlights the voices and reactions of black Africans with the emergence of railway infrastructure. Therefore supporting Ashis Nandy's claim that even ahistorical Beings possess a past; within this context, the past includes interaction between technology, people and infrastructural development.

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[217] Wright, L. 2010. 'Third World Express', pp. 8 – 9.

The Asymmetry of Historical Beings

Building to this point, empirical evidence in the form of photographs as a means to illustrate the constructed archive of NZASM and poetry as a locale for black African voices in railway histories has been examined. This section will expand this discussion by engaging in the theoretical debates on historicism and its innate exclusionary structure of the subaltern. The base of historical consciousness is founded on the principles of time. Time forms an integral part of imagining and locating a Being epistemologically, the logic informing the construction of the western modern Being is applied along a straight axis that engages applied time as deeply historicist. Plural ways that different communities arrive at the past, be it linear or circular, do not depend on a universal (also read as historicist) construction of time and are thus excluded from being historical. This point is emphasised by Ashis Nandy in his discussion of ahistorical Beings and the construction of history.[218] Engagement with the photographs and poetry has demonstrated that within the archive of railway histories a narrative of the ahistorical can be developed from analysing the past, however even through such an exercise the ahistorical continue to exist "outside" of history. This is so because of the limitations of historical consciousness and the criteria of who qualifies as historical.

Before delving into the discussion of the positionality of the subject (western and non-western) within the historical consciousness of railway histories in South Africa it is essential to first engage the definition of historicism. Below are simplified definitions of historicism as outlined by Karl Popper and Dipesh Chakrabarty:

> "Historicism is a mode of thinking that tells us that in order to understand the nature of anything in this world we must see it as an historically developing entity, that is, first, as an individual and unique whole – as some kind of unity at least in *potentia* – and, second, as something that develops over time."[219] [Dipesh Chakrabarty]

> "I mean by 'historicism' an approach to the social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principle aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the 'rhythms' or the 'patterns', the 'laws' or the 'trends' that underlie the evolution of history." [220] [Karl Popper]

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[218] Nandy, A.1998. 'History's Forgotten Doubles' in Pomper, P; Elphick, R. H & Vann, T. R. (eds.) *World History: Ideologies, Structures, and Identities.* Blackwell Publishers, Oxford. pp. 159 – 178.

[219] Chakrabarty, D. 2000. *Provincializing Europe*. Princeton University Press, p. 7.

[220] Popper, K. R. 1963. *The Poverty of Historicism.* Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. p. 3.

Despite emerging from different intellectual paradigms, both Popper and Chakrabarty acknowledge that the development of time with a possible predication of an ultimate end of history[221] forms the theoretical framework of historicism in the broader arguments they make within their respective scholarship. Such a logical passage is evident in Kant's "man as outgrowing his immaturity" hypothesis, Hegel's dialectics towards the absolute "Truth" and Marx's emancipation of the proletariat through owning means of production, all scholars influenced in one way or the other by the Enlightenment. However, Popper and Chakrabarty have divergent critiques of historicism and a huge contributor to this is the situated-ness of the thinker within the western modernity matrix.

While Popper is critical of the doctrines of historicism, his main preoccupation is anchored in the methodological approach of the social sciences which claims to move towards the 'end of history' yet synchronously conceding to the idea of growing human knowledge as he claims that these two factors contradict each other. The desire to track the end of history while admitting to the infinite potential of "new" knowledge is counter-intuitive; and the two cancel each other out. The underlying question here is that, how is it possible that the end of history can be known/theorised if future human knowledge(s) is not yet known? He argues against the move away from the method of physics that looks/studies the naturalistic world using the same equation for different variables by the social sciences in the attainment of a universalist end of history.[222] His understanding of time, space and arriving at the past remains unchanged, as the bastion of his thinking borrows heavily from the Enlightenment knowledge production paradigm. Popper continues to imagine all Beings as existing within the same constructions of time despite their varied worldviews and imagining of the past, present and future.[223] While there is some form of merit in his criticism of historicism, his approach is

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[221] Both scholars discuss that the discipline of history as modelled on western knowledge production systems/structure, much like other disciplines within Enlightenment scholarship, as such approaches knowledge production following the principles of the hard sciences that entail that all forms of knowledge lead to an end of sorts. This method is based on the attainment of the ultimate Truth as can be reached in physics and mathematics when following specific equations. The 'end of history' within historicism speaks to the theoretical framing/conceptualisation of which parts of the past are valid or important enough to account as history/historical evidence thus creating parameters that make measurement towards an end 'possible'.

[222] Ibid., p. 5.

[223] A circular worldview can be realised in plural ways/forms. Within this specific context, it entails that the past is intertwined with the present as well as the future in the same space and time. An example to illustrate how this can be realised is by analysing African spirituality and ancestral belief. An individual who has the gift of being a healer and follows through with the entire process possesses the spirit of an ancestor that accesses the material world through them, almost like a vessel but they are also actively involved in the process. A healer in African spirituality has the power of knowing and having formed part of the past through the ancestor within, living in the

strange as it fails to acknowledge nuance and bias, and assumes that all variables in history are consistent. An example of the inconsistencies of history can be observed through the earlier discussion of the photographs and the dominant narrative that emanates from the choreographed archive. It cannot be correct to just visit the archive or past without necessarily acknowledging the effects of power relations amongst the studied subjects and its documentation thereof. For instance there is clear information on NZASM, Dutch employees and Afrikaner gangers and their relation with the political economy of the time but very little documentation of the Black[224] groups forming part of that history despite them being affected and participating in these histories.

Sometimes, revisionist histories also fall into the trap of historicism. A similar case of applying Eurocentric measurements to the Other's past/histories is observed in Leonard Thompson's *A History of South Africa,* where despite his attempts at inclusive histories, he counter-intuitively subscribes to the thinking and approach of the precolonisation past of the Other as prehistory and thus existing "outside" of history. Prehistory is an ambiguous term to use because it presupposes that along the chronological timeline the existence of Beings and the validity of their past was pinned at a specific time/event and used as a blueprint measurement for the discipline. This measurement erases not only the bodies of the Other but simultaneously negates any forms of knowledges that may assist in accessing that past without the need for extensive scientific and empirical justifications from the Other to the Eurocentric thinker.

> "In unraveling the prehistory of Southern Africa, the best we can do on many crucial topics is
> to express approximations, probabilities, and informed conjectures derived from the available
> evidence. The situation improves when we reach the time when literate eyewitnesses began to
> produce written descriptions; but not until the nineteenth century do we have the first substantial
> descriptions of societies in the interior of South Africa." [225]

The case of Thompson may speak to an entirely different historical context and of course railway histories in South Africa can be said to have existed within "history". However, it can be contested that despite their existence within this past, the black Beings can still be seen as

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present and also knowing the future because of their ability to tap into the spiritual realm that has foresight. The process does not unfold in a linear and consistent manner and the cyclic can interchange as per the need.

[224] Within this context, Black is an identity inclusive of other racial and ethnic groups who have undergone oppression via colonisation, these groups include Africans, Indians, Coloureds and Chinese. These groups are also highlighted due to their direct link and association with railway histories of South Africa.

[225] Thompson, L. 2001. *A History of South Africa.* Yale Nota Bene, Yale University Press, p. 2.

subjects located outside of history and can be categorised under the ambiguous term "prehistory" because their past cannot be located within historical consciousness. While there may be empirical evidence supporting the existence of Black groups within the archive, to study the subject the researcher has to step outside the bounds of the discipline and find other modes of locating the subject in the past by exploring alternative epistemologies in understanding what exists within the archive.

Chakrabarty, as a non-western thinker/Other, critiques historicism by first identifying that the only theoretically knowable subject within historicism is European. By this he means that non-western subjects are only knowable as the difference (read as the "lack", "absence", "incomplete", "failure" or "prehistorical") to the European historical subject. Their failure to be European entails that they exist outside the historical milieu. Non-western histories are thus relegated to the imaginary "waiting room" of history where the subject will have to become European, therefore knowable, through institutions of citizenship, democracy and, the private and public life.[226] This is a belonging denied to the Other through coloniality but can be partially achieved through cultural assimilation as discussed during the analysis of the orchestrated NZASM photograph archive. The archival site of non-western histories can only exist within the parameters drawn by a historical consciousness that has a pre-empted destiny that does not take into cognisance the plural ways in which time and space is approached by the Other, who exists as an invisible subject. While there is a literal manner in which railway infrastructure occupies the material world, Segooa's poem illustrated how interpretations of the same object differ among people based on their beliefs and worldviews. Non-western Others, as such, exist "outside" of history, even those who attempt to assimilate into European culture never reach that place of full subject-hood. The argument is that the elite leadership within the Other communities tend to use the language of history as a negotiating tool into personhood and citizenship through a nationalist ideology which still conforms to the construction of historical consciousness.[227] This causes a shift in memory (remembrance) and the obscuring of [other] epistemes and pasts using the canons of historicism.[228] South African revisionist historians have sometimes fallen into the trap of linking nationalism with histories of the Other, while this is important and works towards constructing a bigger archive and

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[226] Chakrabarty, D. *Provincializing Europe,* p. 34.

[227] See, Chakrabarty, D. *Provincializing Europe,* pp. 15 & Nandy, A. 1998. 'History's Forgotten Doubles.' pp. 159 – 161.

[228] Nandy, A. 1998. 'History's Forgotten Doubles.' p. 159.

knowledge corpus, it fails to adequately account for the silences and gaps that exist for those who occupy a different space outside of the dominant national identity.

Institutionalised history is carved along a totalitarian historical consciousness that operates with a single path towards being historical, whereas the ahistorical zone has multiple forms of cultural imaginings that exist "outside" the historical. It is the universalism of historical consciousness that is estranged to plural paths of history since its tenets of excavating the past are based on an objective and rational empiricism that cannot accommodate approaches to pasts which are "irrational" and transcendental. Ashis Nandy explains that it is the fear of ambiguity, inherent in mythologisation, within the discipline of history that has made self-reflexivity a difficult exercise and thus enforced Enlightenment universalist approaches to history.[229] The language used to record these pasts within historical consciousness is modelled on the modern scientific enterprise that emphasises raw data and therefore ostracises the ethical and moral lessons found in using mythology as a method to excavate the past. Again, an attempt at excavating the past cannot just be based on empirical evidence on a superficial level. For example, just looking at the pictures and the poems as literal tools towards knowing railway histories of the Other without necessarily engaging further with the Other's worldview and context is a fallacy in itself. It is this modern scientific enterprise that was adopted by colonial, segregationist and apartheid South African governments from the inception of railways as a tool to modernise and maintain the borders between the historical and ahistorical. The archive itself is also structured along similar principles hence the necessity to read between the silences and gaps, particularly in histories of science and technology in settler colonies.

Colonial and apartheid South Africa, in an undertaking to modernise, used a stringent application of the hard sciences to structure and group the South African population in accordance with racial and class groupings based on Eurocentric classifications. It comes as no surprise that, when tracing South African historiography, one is faced with glaring gaps of histories that existed outside the historical consciousness. Nigel Worden is amongst the scholars who have identified the cause of these historiographical gaps as rooted in the prioritisation of white European bodies in Africa as written, recorded and communicated history.[230] The imperial project of expansion therefore took precedence in the writing of history, especially in spaces of knowledge production, thus relegating the Other communities

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[229] Ibid., p. 167.

[230] Worden, W. 1995. *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid.* Historical Association Studies: Blackwell Publishers Limited, pp. 1 – 4.

to the margins of historical consciousness. The creation of the historical and ahistorical zone can be approached as two-fold, firstly as one of the ways to justify the violent colonisation of the Other and secondly, as an untouched 'ahistorical' zone with control over narrative within an alternative to consciousness.[231] More so in the scholarship that looks at the relations between the Other and science/technology.

This section explored ways wherein historicism is to western modernity as purple is to lavender - this is an adaptation from Alice Walker's "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender"[232] - by examining the intertwined relationship between historicism and western modernity; acknowledging that in both instances, the roots of the subject are embedded within Eurocentric constructions of time and space. However, it is imperative to note that, while historicism can exist without western modernity, it supplied the theoretical and ideological justification for European domination of the rest of the world in late nineteenth century. Railway histories were not immune to this development which explains why colonial administrators defined the terms of the existence of railway infrastructure while many Black communities reacted and responded to this technological development. This, however, is not to suggest that the response from the Black communities was merely passive instead it is to emphasise that information accessible within the archive only speaks of a single active voice, the European/colonial narrative.

Conclusion

The archive is an important base for inquiry of the past, particularly when dealing with histories and institutions that have ceased to exist in the contemporary world. However, the nature and structure of the archive as well as historicism is exclusionary to the subaltern because it is based on universalist principles of knowledge production and consumption. It is seldom for railway histories to be linked with histories and narratives of people, especially of those who are categorised as ahistorical Beings. This chapter has explored alternative methods of reading the archive in an attempt to access the past by critiquing the very tenets that form the historical discipline. The aim is not necessarily to nullify all the methods of historicism but rather to suggest for a more plural approach towards engaging with the past since historical consciousness (as it is currently structured) is unable to accommodate all Beings existing in the

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[231] Nandy, A. 'History's Forgotten Doubles', p. 161.
[232] Walker, A. 1983. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose.* Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. pp. xi-xii.

past, present and future. A reconceptualization of historical consciousness is then necessary for inclusivity of the subaltern in historical writing. Photographs and poetry are a good entry point for reading into the past and attempting to locate the subaltern within it, furthermore they provide an entry into the silences of history and the alternative ways in which the terms of engagement with the archive can be structured. While this may be true, it is not common for visuals and literature to be used as sources within written histories in South Africa thus the multiple gaps and silences in the written and taught histories. The presence of railway infrastructure has altered the very fabric of Black communities, politics and economies in as much as it has settler colonial communities. Chapter two focused more on railway histories that accounted for the white people of South Africa and this chapter was dedicated towards illustrating an alternative way of understanding that past from the position of an ahistorical Being with little data to work with besides the one preserved in the archive for the benefit of the dominant colonial narrative.

Chapter Four
The Making of
South African Railways & Harbours, Urbanisation and Townships

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Introduction

Post the South African War, there were multiple negotiations that were undertaken between the British colonies and the Afrikaner republics building up to the Union of South Africa in 1910. Administrative changes were introduced across governance and corporate institutions within the region with the purpose of unifying and solidifying a white South Africa. The emergence of the British as the victors of the war in 1902 meant that the negotiations building towards the Union Act were not necessarily based on equal terms; the Afrikaners, to a lesser extent, and other racially marginalised groups had little power and influence on the outcomes. By this time, it was clear that the politics and economy of South Africa were moulded towards a western ideology and imagining of modernity promoted through the Milner administration. Prior the war, the colonial and republic governments had independent approaches and policies regarding governance, the economy as well as railway administration. Part of this is largely influenced by the various foreign investments from Germany and Britain targeted at the mining industry and industrialisation as discussed in chapter 2. However; other less political factors such as the environment, disease and labour also influenced the shaping of the emergence of railways within each region.

It is true that colonial South Africa was ahead in terms of railway construction in the continent on the one hand; however, on the other hand it was lagging behind, comparatively, European countries which had been in contact with rail transportation since the early years of the nineteenth century and the industrialisation of the eighteenth century. Thus, some of the challenges experienced by a modernising South Africa with imperial aspirations of modernity have a close resemblance to European encounters and crises with modernity. For rail transportation, particularly after Union, it was imperative that the political and business aspect of the industry be separated and treated independently. This was effected through legislation, however, praxis proved rather challenging as railway segregation was enforced on the basis of racial classifications and had effects on the commercial operations of the railway administrations.

Rail transportation is known to have significantly contributed towards the development of the mining industry through facilitating the mobility of migrant labour, especially that of black African labourers. This led to a social reconfiguration not only of the rural communities but urban spatial planning was also shaped by the growing industrialisation of the urban spaces. National politics and legislation were also influential in this regard as the Railway Regulation Act of 1909, the Natives (Urban) Areas Act of 1923 and the Group Areas Act of 1950 paved the way for an intersectional relationship between railway entities and municipalities in creating and providing segregated transportation for the townships. This chapter will discuss the SAR&H in its earlier years and the influence of politics in the business model of transportation in South Africa. Furthermore, it will discuss the process of urbanisation and the history behind township establishment and rail transportation for many black Africans residing in the city with employment outside the mining industry and compound residential accommodation.

The Intersections between Business and Politics in the SAR&H: Brief Background

When the Union Act of 1909 was promulgated it resulted in the amalgamation of the NGR, CGR, CSAR, and later ports and harbours, under a single government-owned entity, the South African Railways and Harbours (SAR&H)[233] from 1910. The inception of SAR&H was realised through the Railway Construction and Acquisition Act of 1909 in preparation for a centralised railway administration under the Union of South Africa. Unique to the Union Act was the incorporation of the basic principles of railway administration as drafted by the Milner Kindergarten, a cohort of non-South Africans. The logic behind this insertion was premised on the CSAR model which removed governmental interference in the dealings of railway business.[234] Granted this tactic may be viewed as a method of ensuring a self-sufficient transport industry, however, this is one of the methods, in collaboration with modern capital,

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[233] In the first decade of this administrative merger, the government-owned corporation was referred to as the South African Railways (SAR). Although from inception harbours and ports were included in this entity it was only in the 1920s that the name formally included 'Harbours' and became known as South African Railways and Harbours (SAR&H) following the broadening of the economic activity of the industrial and agricultural sector. In this chapter/dissertation the term used to reference the entity is SAR&H since the abbreviation SAR has already been used in the previous chapter as representing South African Republic (SAR).

[234] Surdut, B. 1977. 'South African Airways: State – or Public Enterprise?' MA Thesis submitted at the University of Cape Town, pp. 47 – 48.

whereby the moulding of South Africa was based on western modern ideals, specifically those mirroring British imperialism.

Transition from a multi-administered railway system to a centralised railway system proved complex as it was marred by precarious political positions and anxieties between Afrikaner and British officials and communities. The complexities also extended into legislation as there was debate regarding which railway administrative model to adopt resulting in the formation of a Railway Commission appointed to investigate the pros and cons of the relationship between governmental meddling from the commercial enterprise.[235] From inception, the SAR&H had already inherited the challenges related to each predecessor's political context and historical emergence which was difficult to reconcile, especially during the earlier stages of this particular administrative dispensation. While the CSAR was lauded for boasting an independent railway administration under a railway committee, the NGR and CGR still had heavy political influence within their operations.[236] Challenges also included the strained relationship between the Chamber of Mines and the various government-owned railway entities due to interference with the mobility of goods and recruitment of migrant labourers. In a letter to the Chairman of the Industrial Commission of Inquiry, John Dougall (a member of the Town Council of the newly established Pretoria municipality in 1902 who later became the Chairman of the Pretoria Native Welfare Association)[237] questioned the competitive advantage of NZASM over other railway corporations due to governmental interference.[238] The economic competitive edge of the Eastern Line over other lines was in no small part a result of the Sivewright Agreement and meant that a reshuffling in financial structuring was essential from 1910 for all railway corporations.

Pirie notes that the challenges experienced by the mining industries before the introduction of standardisation in 1910, which enforced uniformity in the "five-finger system", included uncoordinated traffic arrangement, cost accounting and budgeting as well as gang recruitment concessions.[239] A task that was awaiting the first General Manager of SAR&H was

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[235] Ibid., pp. 51 – 52.

[236] Ibid., p. 54.

[237] Friedman, M. 1994. 'A History of Africans in Pretoria with Special Reference to Marabastad 1902 - 1923.' MA dissertation submitted at the University of South Africa, p. 52.

[238] Witwatersrand Chamber of Mines, "Mining Industry Evidence and Report: Mr Dougall's Letter of the Netherlands Railway Company," in South Africa Archive, Item #48, http://southafricaarchive.org/items/show/48.

[239] Gordon, G. H. 1993. 'Railways and Labour Migrants to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance.' *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 722 – 723.

consolidating all the provincial railway administrations while simultaneously separating the politics from the business of railways. This task was not going to be easy due to the debates around the legal ambiguity of section 126 of the Act. Until the passing of the Railway Board Act of 1916, it was unclear whether the administrative powers were held by the General Manager or by the Railway Advisory Board.[240] The Treaty of Vereeniging was one of the agreements reached between the Afrikaners and British representatives after the defeat of the Afrikaners during the South African War. During the war the railways of the republics were overtaken by the Imperial Military Railways (IMR) from 1900 until 1902.[241] After the defeat of the Afrikaners the railways administrations of the republics, NZASM, Pretoria and Pietersburg Railways and the Orange Free State Railways, were collapsed into a centralised administration under the CSAR. Sir William Hoy served as the first appointed General Manager of SAR&H during its inception in 1910 after his service from 1904 as the Chief Traffic Manager of the CSAR.[242] He was an influential figure during the transitional phase of the formation of South Africa in the railway diplomacy arena. The initial clause in the Railway Act as stipulated by its drafters entailed that the administrative powers of the SAR&H would be held by a non-political Railway Advisory Board and will not operate as a Department of the state. The ambiguity in the Act led to many power contestations between the General Manager representing the railways and the Railway Advisory Board until 1916 when the Railway Board Act was enforced. This gave power to the General Manager of the SAR&H with the board assuming an advisory role.[243] Additionally, the enforcement of the 1916 Railway Act created the foundation that opened space for segregation and apartheid in railways through the 1918 Railway Regulations Act that directly imposed the government ideology of segregation among the various racial groups.[244] Individuals like Frankel who were in support of the CSAR model which completely removed national politics from railway operations were unhappy with this compromise. Not everybody was satisfied with the decision of the 1916 Act; however some semblance of compromise was reached since Hoy served in the CSAR.

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[240] Surdut, B. 'South African Airways,' p. 50.

[241] de Jong, R. C. 1987. 'The NZASM In and Around Pretoria: A Visual Record.' *Journal of the Pretoria Historical Society (Old Pretoria Society),* p. 9.

[242] Lee, Robin. 2016. 'Sir William Hoy (1868 – 1930) – His Life Beyond Hermanus.' Accessed Online http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/sir-william-hoy-1868-1930-his-life-beyond-hermanus.

[243] Surdut, B. 'South African Airways,' pp. 50 & 54.

[244] Gordon, P. H. 1992. 'Rolling Segregation into Apartheid: South African Railways, 1948 – 53.' *Journal of Contemporary History.* Vol. 27, p. 671.

All the railway networks of the Cape, Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State regions, together with the connected annexed lands, were now centrally administered under the Department of Railways and Harbours during the early years of SAR&H.[245] While other regions such as Southern Rhodesia, Marques Lourenco and Bechuanaland were connected to this railway network and were feeders of migrant labour to the mines in the Transvaal; these lines operated independently, politically and economically, from the SAR&H. The independence of these regions from the 1960s to the 1980s, and later in 1990 for Namibia, affected the economic network and activity as a boycott was initiated by the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) which stifled South Africa's economy during the heightened eras of apartheid and international sanctions drawing close to the democratisation of South Africa.[246] Although this study does not reach the years of the SADCC boycott, it is worth mentioning because of the persistent use of railway infrastructure as a political site and tool of resistance for the oppressed. The labour force formed a critical core of the industrialisation and urbanisation of South Africa through the mining industry and the development of rail and road transportation. This, among other factors, influenced the stationing of the SAR&H administrative headquarters in Johannesburg in 1916, a period that has been termed "the dawn of the modern era of transportation".[247]

A figure like Hoy is hugely celebrated in railway histories because of his role in SAR&H. His mindfulness of the necessity of separating the business from the politics was essential for a government-owned corporation like SAR&H, however, his approach of separating the two was always tactical. Profit maximisation and industrialisation were areas heavily emphasised by Hoy during his tenure. This change in management was of absolute priority for the railway industry as there was looming pressure for railway expansion and repayment of foreign investment loans. Hoy's roots and political background originating from Natal pre-South African War, meant that his political disposition was leaning more towards British imperialism hence the concern towards the commercial preservation of the railway enterprise. From a governmental level, the British seemed to dominate the narrative of the new "white" South Africa through the appointment of officials like Hoy. However, Hoy did enjoy

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[245] Martin, P. 2004. 'Railways in South Africa: Historic Highlights, Strategic Evolution and Transformation 1845 – 2002.' Report prepared for Spoornet, p. 3.

[246] Pirie, G. 1991. 'Reorienting and Restructuring Transport in Southern Africa.' *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie.* Vol. 82, No. 5, p. 346.

[247] Martin, P. 2004. 'Railways in South Africa: Historic Highlights, Strategic Evolution and Transformation 1845 – 2002.' Prepared on behalf of *Spoornet*, p. 4.

political favour and association with Afrikaner officials such as Jan Smuts which was important for unifying the Afrikaner and British communities.[248] Although negotiations did exist between the forging of a united South Africa, people from either the British or Afrikaner camp remained suspect of the arrangement of Union and part of the discomforts and debates regarding the Railway Acts and Regulations emanated from the precarious relationship between white South Africans and their ambitions towards moulding a white national identity.

Cooperative relations between English and Afrikaner officials were imperative for the solidification of a united white South Africa. During the First World War in 1914, Hoy was entrusted with militarising the South African railways during the German South West Africa (GSWA) campaign. South Africa occupied Namibia in 1915 after defeating Germany, through lobbying by Jan Smuts during the Peace Talks South Africa was granted a class C mandate by the League of Nations over the the GSWA in 1920.[249] Similar to the South African war, railways were instrumental in the Great War as they became a site for mobilisation and conflict.[250] During the GSWA campaign, SAR&H employees demonstrated an impressive work ethic and high level of skill as railways were constructed under constrained and turbulent conditions and in a short time span.[251] Labour was performed by different racial groups during this time. Although Hoy occasionally inserted the railway industry in the business of politics, it was during his administrative years in which economic innovations such as electrification of the railways, tourism and filmmaking, amongst others, were launched and supported by the SAR&H.[252] It was during the administrative years of SAR&H whereas railways assumed multi-layered identities as an infrastructure. Amongst these identities was the imagining of a new "white" South Africa using landscape and tourism as well the construction of white nationalism pinned to the belonging-ness of white bodies within the railway spaces. Tourism was facilitated and operated under the Publicity Department which was the first of its kind in the transportation industry.[253] The Publicity Department was crucial for the rebranding of the SAR&H along the

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[248] Lee, Robin. 2016. 'Sir William Hoy (1868 – 1930) – His Life Beyond Hermanus.' Accessed Online http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/sir-william-hoy-1868-1930-his-life-beyond-hermanus.

[249] Kleynhans, E. 2015. 'South African Invasion of German South West Africa (Union of South Africa)' in Daniel, U.; Gatrell, P.; Janz, O.; Jones, H., Keene, J., Kramer, A., & Nasson, B. (eds.) *1914 – 1918 International Encyclopedia of the First World War.* Freie Universitat Berlin.

[250] Lee, 'Sir William Hoy,', n.p.

[251] 'Railway Country: 150 Years of Rail in South Africa.' https://www.transetfreightrail-tfr.net.

[252] Foster, J. 2003. ''Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always Known'?: the SAR&H and the imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910 – 1930.' *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 661.

[253] Ibid., pp. 661 & 663.

imagined "white" South African national identity; additionally, it served as an economic pull factor for tourism as the freight industry was highly contested by road transportation.[254]

For the Union of South Africa, railway transportation formed an integral part of the national economic identity[255] and as such its operations could never be treated within a vacuum. As explained by Perkins, Fedderke and Luiz "[t]he relationship between an economy and its economic infrastructure is analogous to that between a building and its foundation".[256] The imagining of the new, modern and white South Africa was anchored on a modern form of transportation whose function reached beyond the movement of goods, but also influenced the crafting of an urban identity and spatial planning. As discussed in chapter three, the identity of railways was exclusionary yet the effects of railway infrastructure penetrated the communities and cultures of the subaltern in varied ways. The deliberate linking of national identity to railway infrastructure focused exclusively on white/European culture and did not recognise how the subaltern identified with space, infrastructure or technology.[257]

The majority of the railway networks that were absorbed by SAR&H were main lines which were not designed to cater for transportation that traversed over large stretches of land thus it was difficult to manage the logistics during the administrative change-over.[258] Pre Union, branch lines were not prioritised due to the financial implications and other demands relating to railway construction. Reliance on foreign aid investment in the emergence and construction of railway infrastructure was another contributing factor. Firstly, foreign aid investment was distributed along political linkages that emulated the British-German tensions in Europe and secondly, the ox-tram mode of transportation was still sufficient. To an extent, road transportation was able to cater for the movement of less heavy machinery and goods while the poorest black Africans seeking employment in the mines resorted to walking to the Rand mines.

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[254] Horwitz, R. 1936. 'The Restriction of Competition between Road Motor Transport and the Railways in the Union of South Africa.' Masters Dissertation submitted at the University of Cape Town.

[255] Ibid., p. 661.

[256] Perkins, P.; Fedderke, J.; Luiz, J. 2005. '*An Analysis of Economic Infrastructure Investment in South Africa.*' CSSR Working Paper No. 102. Centre for Social Science Research: University of Cape Town, pp. 3.

[257] Wenhold, M. W. 2007. 'A Railway, Science and Technology Museum.' MA Dissertation submitted at the University of Pretoria, pp. 14 – 20.

[258] Janse Van Rensburg, R. A. 1996. '*The History of the Rail Transport Regulatory Environment in South Africa.*' Department of Economic Management and Science: Research Article. Access online Stellenbosch University Scholar Research Repository. http://hdl.handle.net/10019.1/85556, p. 6.

Economically, railway transportation was beneficial since it allowed for easier and quicker movement of goods from the ports to the inlands. It also enabled an easy and shorter migration journey of labourers to the mines and factories from rural lands or township settlements. However, it is important to note that much of this foreign investment was in the form of a loan. In theory, railway transportation was convenient and necessary for enhancing the process of modernisation, in praxis, it unfortunately consumed a lot of finances and was unable to produce enough revenue to sustain itself and payback the loaned investment. Some factors contributing to this slow economic turnover may be as a result of some of the wars that destroyed some of the infrastructure and its ramifications, as in the case of white poverty and employment in the CSAR, the complexities of colonial administration as well as the vast geographic topography. Additionally, the demands of labour for railway operations and the burgeoning industrialisation led to the creation of economic epicentres and urbanisation. While industrialisation and urbanisation came with multiple benefits in a global economy shifting away from agriculture, it also came with a darker side that lead to social engineering, spatial injustices and, in the case of South Africa, institutionalisation of racism.

The consolidated regions that formed the Union of South Africa had a deficit in branch lines extending into peripheralised communities thus affecting access to rail transportation for economic or personal consumption. In some instances road transportation had to be used as a feeder to isolated branch lines and a relationship had to be established between rail and road transportation. Communities affected by inaccessibility to branch lines were agricultural communities, both commercial farmers and rural settlements were affected. The effects were economic and social because of the difficulty of participating effectively within the trade markets as well as accessing the migrant labour system. Lack of access to rail transportation by the majority of the formal agricultural sector not only affected the economic growth of those who were hindered by inaccessibility, it also made suspect the ideology of a civilised and unified white South African community since the majority of the farmers were Afrikaner. Railways as a site of national identity also exposed the fickle nature of the relationship between white South Africans in the modernising mission. As one of the ways to close the gap, SAR&H embarked on a fourteen-year mission of railway infrastructure expansion as a measure to cater for the vast lands and economies neglected by the already existing lines.[259] Factored in the expansion was the establishment of branch lines that connected the Bantu locations/townships

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[259] 'Railway Country: 150 Years of Rail in South Africa.' https://www.transetfreightrail-tfr.net.

with the towns and employment regions. Railway construction grew by 2.5 per cent between 1910 and 1930 resulting in a real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 2.0 per cent.[260]

Consequently, South Africa's economy was shifting towards an industrial configuration. With the formation of the Hertzog government in 1924 came the establishment of new para-statals such as Eskom and the South African Iron and Steel Corporation (Iscor) which aided the modernising and industrialising of South Africa.[261] Although the process of industrialisation was catalysed by the mining sector and the rising value of the Gold Standard in international markets, South Africa still had an active agricultural sector. One of the ways that the SAR&H attempted to address the issue of agriculture was through the construction of more branch lines connecting the more active agricultural zones as well as appealing for a cross-subsidisation policy for farmers.[262] In this way, the economic as well as social engineering struggles that accompanied railway infrastructures and its impact on sociality was somewhat addressed. However, it is important to highlight that the farmers who were considered in this regard were white farmers, majority being Afrikaners. Farmers from other racial groups may have benefitted indirectly but the policy itself was exclusionary towards their struggles. The solution of cross-subsidisation was contentious and affected many other sectors. The majority of sectors outside of the railway industry were affected by cross-subsidisation through service tariffs and taxation as this process was handled through the National Treasury.[263] The government support of the railways has always seemed to contradict the mission[264] of SAR&H which emphasised the importance of a free trade market. However, the SAR&H was acting in consistence with the Hertzog PACT government whose focus was on alleviating Afrikaner poverty through aid for Afrikaner farmers especially during the Depression years. The commercial enterprise ideals espoused in the Union Act of 1909 were

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[260] Perkins, Fedderke & Luiz, 'An Analysis of Economic Infrastructure Investment in South Africa' p. 7.

[261] Christie, R. 1978. '"Slim Jannie" and the Forces of Production: South African Industrialisation 1915 – 1925.' Collected Seminar Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies. Vol. 22, pp. 94 – 102.

[262] Martin, P, 'Railways in South Africa', pp. 5 – 6. Martin explains cross-subsidisation as follows: "The term 'cross-subsidisation' is inadvertently used by [SAR&H] critics when describing [SAR&H]'s pricing practices. In determining the tariff for a specific service in practice, the fact that another service or commodity is transported at a loss is never taken into account. Every tariff is calculated and quoted as a price based on the cost of providing the service. It is only at the bottom-line of the GFB or [SAR&H] Income Statement that the revenues (total tariff income) and cost/expenditure are brought together. No profit made on one service is ever directly off-set against the loss made on another service".

[263] Ibid., pp. 5 – 6.

[264] SAR&H mission statement, "The railways, ports, and harbours of the Union shall be administered on business principles; due regard being given to agricultural and industrial development within the Union and promotion, by means of cheap transport, of the settlement of an agricultural and industrial population in the inland portions".

undermined by cross-subsidisation because of the effects of governmental interference on the operations of the railway business. In parliamentary debates, mine owners and entrepreneurs alike, contested the monopoly of railway transportation as road transportation was becoming a strong and convenient competitor with the development of roads as an effective and economic alternative.[265]

The Motor Carrier Transport Act of 1930 was enforced after the Le Roux Commission of Inquiry was established in 1929 to investigate the transport policy crisis that arose with the introduction of economical diesel engine trucks in the 1920s.[266] Despite the lack of road infrastructure to support motor carrier transportation, the commercial interests of the railways were threatened by this competition. Outcomes from this investigation outlined the problematic nature of unrestricted and uncontrolled transport competition for the railways, in what was described by the Minister of SAR&H of 1930 as "pre-1930 was an era for wasteful competition" in the transport industry.[267] This act restricted the use of transportation other than the railways to move commercial goods over 50km.[268] Furthermore, this policy was especially detrimental for the African entrepreneurs dominating the taxi industry through the quota certification in section 5 of the same Act.[269] Although the SAR&H claimed in its mission that it operated on business principles, the government bias is clearly demonstrable through policy and legislation and its effects on other transport industries was not taken into consideration. Part of the reasons behind the government meddling in the affairs of the railway sector was anchored in the governmental agreements and negotiations with foreign investors in the nineteenth century, therefore, creating a challenge for national politics to entirely divorce from railway transportation business. In a similar case to that of NZASM and other railway entities, privately-owned businesses involved in road transportation were suppressed through legislation thus coercing a competitive edge for rail transportation. Suppression of road transportation even overlapped into the lack of investment in tar road construction from the government therefore making it difficult for trucks and other automobiles to travel.[270] The restriction and regulation of road transportation is similar to the case of ox-tram competition in the Eastern Cape during the administrative years of CGR. Financially, it was logical for the

[265] Perkins, Fedderke & Luiz, 'An Analysis of Economic Infrastructure Investment in South Africa' pp. 9 – 11
[266] Martin, P, 'Railways in South Africa', p. 6.
[267] Khosa, M. M. 1998. ''The Travail of Travelling': Urban Transport in South Africa, 1930–1996.' *Transport Reviews*. Vol. 18, No.1, pp. 17-33.
[268] Martin, P, 'Railways in South Africa', p. 6.
[269] Khosa, 'The Trail of Travelling', p. 21.
[270] Perkins, Fedderke & Luiz, 'An Analysis of Economic Infrastructure Investment in South Africa' pp. 9 – 11.

government to actively use politics in the preservation of monopolising inland transportation. Reasons ranging from foreign investment to GDP growth can be cited. However, such behaviour contradicted the mission of the SAR&H and explained the tensions between commercial business and railway industry that persisted through into the 1980s.

In the years preceding the 1940s, South Africa was in an economic depression with the crash of the US markets and the weakening the Gold Standard, the drought and effects of the South African and Great War. A plateau was reached with infrastructural development all round.[271] However, the country's fortune changed after the Second World War as there was an economic shift towards active participation in export trade and railway transportation was central in the process.[272] The relationship between the political and commercial uses of the railways coincided with the spatial planning of the urban centres which were experiencing bouts of population growth and permanent settlement. Railways became a defining infrastructure influencing the placement of Bantu townships and resettlement zones, multiple Railway Acts would later be passed in an effort to accommodate black labour located in the periphery of the zones of employment.

Urbanisation and Spatial Planning of Townships in 'Modern' South Africa

The urbanisation process in South Africa from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century was in large part influenced by the shift from an agrarian to an industrial economy and the migration to the cities that followed. Initially, the labour force comprised the majority of settlers in the industrial cities and over time the population grew more heterogeneous as nuclear families and housing schemes were introduced, particularly for the white population.[273] An example within railway histories is the importation of European skilled labourers, indentured Indian and Chinese labourers and black African labourers who often formed the corpus of the migrant labour system. The migration of black African people into the urban areas was imminent due to the labour demands of industrialisation, movement and settlement in the cities was under serious surveillance by the government, especially the black African labourers who were heavily monitored as they moved in-between their rural homes and urban compounds. Building to this point, much of the discussion focused on the economic and political life of the

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[271] Ibid., p. 6.
[272] 'Railway Country: 150 Years of Rail in South Africa.' https://www.transetfreightrail-tfr.net.
[273] Parnell, S. 1988. 'Land Acquisition and the Changing Residential Face of Johannesburg, 1930 – 1955.' *The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers)*. Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 309 – 311.

railway industry and its various administrative entities, as demonstrated through the examination of the link between the emergence of the railway industry and modern capital as well as the labour behind its earliest constructions. This bias is reflective of the documented histories accessible through literature and the archive. These histories that directly look at the industry and its physical infrastructure are crucial for a contextual basis, however, the indirect consequences of the existence of this infrastructure are equally as important to investigate. The urban spaces are one such consequence.

There are two distinct ways in which the railways have directly influenced the lives of black Africans. Firstly, the railways are associated with mobility and dislocation as many were affected by the migrant labour system that took many labourers, particularly black men, away from their villages to the mining epicentres. Secondly, railways were an important factor in the spatial planning that was linked to the segregationist ideology of the colonial and apartheid government in South Africa during the process of urbanisation. The facilitation and creation of townships in the Transvaal was made possible through a collaborative effort from municipalities, railway entities and the government.[274] Due to various political, social and economic factors many Africans began to migrate to the cities to explore other employment opportunities outside of mining, this venture often took place outside of railway recruitment gangs. The growing migrant population came with its own ramifications and central to these was the question of resettlement. Settlement in the urban centres evolved over time eventually resulting in an urban-born and based black generation population in the twentieth century with industries relying less on migration for access to labour.[275] This was good in the sense that industries no longer had to invest as much money in transportation and its processes in getting labour from the "reserves"; due to access of the industrial environment, most urban black African labourers were skilled. However, it was also problematic because it led to many "idle" black African youth who threatened the security of the white population.[276] It is important to state that this threat to white security by black Africans was a constructed perception that was used as justification for segregation, in the same way that the sanitation syndrome was used to justify the creation of townships.

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[274] See, Pirie, G. H. 1987. 'African Township Railways and the South African State, 1902 – 1963.' *Journal of Historical Geography.* Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 283 – 295; & Pirie, G. H. 1986. 'Johannesburg Transport 1905 – 1945: African Capitulation and Resistance.' *Journal of Historical Geography.* Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 41 – 55.

[275] Parnell, S.1998. 'Negotiating Segregation: Pre-Parliamentary Debate over the Natives (Urban Areas) Act of 1923.' *African Studies.* Vol.57, No. 2, p. 155.

[276] Ibid., p. 151.

The growth of an urban-born black population occupying the urban spaces and settling in squatter camps close to white residential areas heightened the anxieties of both the white community and government. The urbanisation process was highly racialised and to an extent mirrored the working environment that categorised employment along racialised hierarchies as reflected in the mineral revolution. Colonial and apartheid governments were preoccupied with the issue of segregated residential living resulting in the promulgation of the Native (Urban) Areas Act (NUAA) of 1923 and the Group Areas Act of 1950. Modernity, or the process building towards its realisation, had to be shaped along western ideals of European purity and supremacy and the racial mixing in residential areas resulted in an existential crisis for the white governments. It was difficult to argue for the supremacy of the European race and the preservation of its purity when there were white individuals and families living among Black communities in urban slums.[277] Racial division was also important because it minimised cases of interracial relationships and marriages. Townships were introduced as part of an effort to remove black Africans from city slums and to maintain distance between the white and Black populations resulting in the displacement of thousands of black Africans coerced into settling on the outskirts of the towns in government-funded houses. The commute to work for many residents living in townships was long and consumed a huge portion of their already low wages estimated between 5 – 20%.[278] White residential areas were always located closer to the employment centres with Indians, Coloureds and the Chinese residing within the buffer zone between white and black African residential areas. This residential change and its financial implications led to the collaboration between the railways and white government on the sub-economic fixing of railway fares.[279]

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[277] Bickford-Smith, V. 1995. 'South African Urban History, Racial Segregation and the Unique Case of Cape Town?' *Special Issue: Urban Studies and Urban Change in Southern Africa.* Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 64 – 65.

[278] Khosa, 'The Trail of Travelling', p. 20.

[279] Pirie, G. H. 'African Township Railways and the South African State,' p. 287.
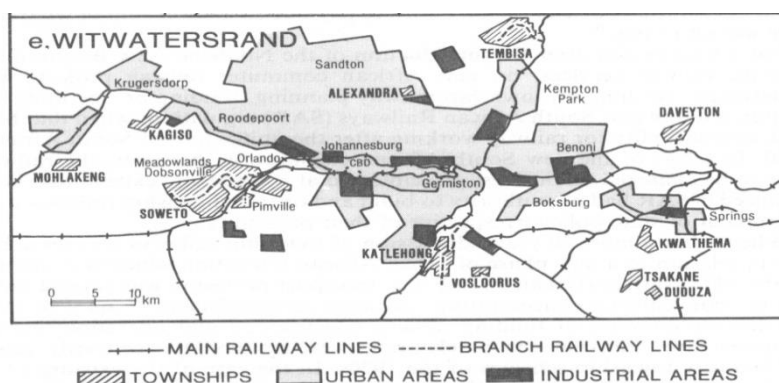
Map 3: Urban Black Townships and Industrial Areas in the Transvaal

Negotiations between railway entities and the township housing projects began in the early 1900s as experimentations were done with shorter lines from Cape Town to Ndabeni (8km), Port Elizabeth to New Brighton and Johannesburg to Pimville (2.5km). Special sub-economic fares were negotiated for Pimville and enforced as a means to attract many black Africans to occupy those regions located far off from industrial and employment zones, these fares were not based on what the residents could afford but rather what they were willing to pay.[280] Although the black Africans had little power regarding where they lived and the mode of transportation available, they were able to at least influence the railway fares by strategically playing on the government's political position on segregation. The precedents of sub-economic fares under the CSAR for Pimville in 1906 were a unique case that was only fully applicable to all other townships after the NUAA of 1923.[281] The commitment towards social engineering as demonstrated by the colonial government held more priority than the economic viability of the model despite the financial pressures emanating from the repayment of the foreign investment loans. The spatial planning of townships and access to industrial and suburban zones was deliberate and strategic, and comparatively smaller than the suburban areas occupied by whites, see map 3. Although the railway entities were more interested in the commercial output of the industry, the governmental ideology always overrode the financial risks that accompanied long distance rail transportation for migrant labour and short distance for access to the townships. Debates justifying the displacement of black Africans from close proximity to the city or suburban areas were anchored in the sanitation syndrome and the bubonic plaque

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[280] Ibid., pp. 284 – 287.
[281] Parnell, S. 'Negotiating Segregation,' p. 152.

outbreak of 1901 served as the final nail in the coffin towards segregated urban residential living.[282]

The rail travel experiences of the black African working class was characterised by small and unsanitary carriages that were below human standards; this persisted from the trains transporting migrant labourers to the branch lines into the townships.[283] Rail travel and experience for black Africans, particularly for migrant labourers, has been described as the "South African middle passage" by transport historian Meshack Khosa[284] while the white/European rail passenger had a polar opposite experience going through tours in railways that could be converted into hotels.[285] Reference to the railways as the "South African middle passage" alludes to the social, cultural and political death of many black African labourers who were transported from their homes to the mines. Some of the poems discussed in chapter 3 highlight how this metaphoric death unfolded for those affected directly through the displacement of their physical bodies as well as the lives altered for those who remained in the villages but lost contact and memory of their loved ones. Through the use of space and rail experience, railway entities cemented who belonged and who was alien to the infrastructure. The rail experience later used by SAR&H to promote tourism through rail travel was preserved for Europeans at the expense of the Other. In the SAR&H Annual Report of 1911 the segregation of rail travel was justified on the basis that black Africans travelling in mixed trains were troublesome and were thus the cause of discomfort for European travellers. It was argued that better service provision had been put in place for the comfort of the black Africans travel in segregated carriages and submitted to the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA).[286] Rail transportation became one of the tools used by colonial, segregationist and apartheid governments to marginalise black Africans from the process and realisation of modernisation, albeit unsuccessfully, in South Africa through exclusion from industries, institutions and geography. Black African people's labour was desired and courted to propel

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[282] Maylam, P. 1995. 'Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography.' *Journal of Southern African Studies, Special Issue: Urban Studies and Urban Change in Southern Africa*. Vol. 21, No.1, pp. 19 – 38.

[283] See, Dent, C. T. 1900. 'A Lecture on Small-Bore Rifle Bullet Wounds and the "Humanity" of the Present War.' *The British Medical Journal,* pp. 1209 – 1213; & Maylam, P. 1995. 'Explaining the Apartheid City: 20 Years of South African Urban Historiography.' *Journal of Southern African Studies, Special Issue: Urban Studies and Urban Change in Southern Africa*. Vol. 21, No.1, pp. 19 – 38.

[284] Khosa, 'The Trail of Travelling'.

[285] Foster, J. 2003. ''Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always Known'?', pp. 666 – 667.

[286] Pirie, G. H. 1993. 'Railways and Labour Migration to the Rand Mines: Constraints and Significance.' *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Taylor and Francis. Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 726 – 727.

and develop the process of modernity, however, there existed parameters that limited their interaction and encounter with the process of modernisation as their experience was intentionally controlled through colonial powers to be differential, sub-standard and segregated.

One of the earlier townships to be established in the Transvaal was Klipspruit in 1905. Located 21km outside of Johannesburg, it was difficult for the government to convince a lot of black Africans to reside there because of the inadequate railway services, commute distance plus the conditions of the carriages were atrocious as reported by the Native Commissioner in 1906.[287] Rail fares may have been one of the ways that the government was negotiating the resettlement of the urban black African population into the townships, however, this is not to suggest that resettlement was not coercive and that the black African working class had any power to contest where they lived or their mode of transportation.[288] Because the Klipspruit branch lines were established before Pimville the fares were low but not sub-economic as yet. Due to the low negotiated fares for commuters, the infrastructure used to build branch lines to townships was below standard. For railway business it was not worth investing in railway infrastructure for townships because of the marginal returns of the low fares economic model; the extension of the infrastructure into townships was pushed by municipalities in alignment with the segregation ideology informing all national policies and legislation. Railway entities before and after the Union were government owned therefore always reflecting and performing the politics of each period.

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[287] Pirie, G. H. 'Johannesburg Transport 1905 – 1945,' p. 42.
[288] Pirie, G. H. 'African Township Railways and the South African State,' p. 286.
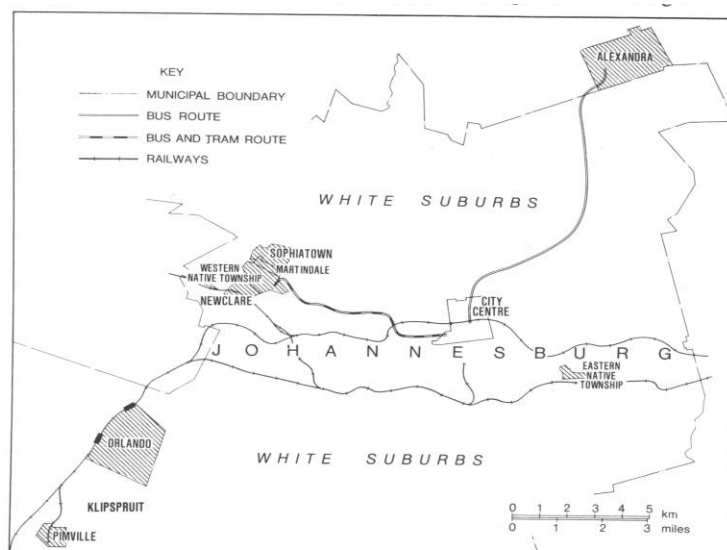
Map 4: Various transport routes connecting townships to industries

Map 4 highlights the spatial positioning of townships in relation to their regions of employment, the city centre and white suburbs, and the various modes of transportation used. The geographic division of space according to racial classifications is disproportionate to the population numbers. When considering the statistics of 1887 of the South African Republic (SAR), a recorded 622,544[289] 'natives' occupied the republic and the white population recorded was 245,397.[290] Granted these statistics covered the entire SAR region and were taken under a different political dispensation under the SAR. However, they do provide insight on land distribution vis-à-vis population for the Transvaal in relation to ownership which is reflected in the twentieth century under the colonial, segregationist and apartheid governments. The majority of the black Africans at this time were settled in either the villages in the countryside or compounds in the city while whites either occupied farms or urban suburbs. It is worth noting that the commencement of the South African War and other wars disrupted the census conducted by the various governments (colonial and republic) and their predecessors (union and apartheid).[291] In the Natives Land Commission Report of 1916 it is noted that black African communities were squeezed out of occupying fertile land by the Afrikaners resulting in overcrowding for the locations that they eventually occupied.[292] The exact same logic is

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[289] See, Annexure A 'Statistics and Census of the Native Population of the South African Republic'.

[290] See, Annexure B 'Statistics of White Population of the South African Republic'.

[291] Christopher, A. J. 2011. 'The Union of South Africa Censuses 1911 – 1960: An Incomplete Record.' *Historia.* Vol. 56, No. 2.

[292] University of the Witwatersrand: Historical Papers, Johannesburg, *Collection no: A1655, Collection: Hunt, Donald Papers,* 'Union of South Africa: Native Land Commission 1916'.

adopted in the imagining and creation of townships; townships were intentionally located in undesirable and inexpensive plots and tended to be overcrowded due to limited access to land and the inability to expand beyond the set demarcations by the government.

The years leading to the establishment of townships was not too far removed from these statistics thus highlighting the discrimination against black Africans owning and using land which is later cemented in legislation through the Native Land Act of 1913, NUAA of 1923 and the Group Areas Act 1950. It is important to note these statistics because when considering map 4, it is evident that space is not divided according to population numbers and needs but rather allocated based on race. There is a strategic placement of the townships at the periphery of the city, such a configuration enabled the monitoring and control of the movement of black Africans from the densely populated townships. Many townships had a single entry and exit point making it easy for the police or soldiers to enter, exit and surveillance the location and difficult for residents to exit. Railways were used as a method of controlling black African movement into the city and white suburbs by providing only two trips in a day; this was the initial structure, one in the morning going to work and the other in the late afternoon coming back from work. There were few options available as alternatives for those who missed either train or those who were delayed getting to work by trains that did not arrive on time, or sometimes not at all.[293]

Railway entities, through the heavy-handedness of the government and municipalities established Joint Technical Committees comprised of railway and municipal representatives to deal with the railway expansion into the townships in the 1950s after the enactment of the Group Areas Act.[294] However, the initial relationship between the two entities was strained due to the different performance management indicators of each institution which were often not aligned. CSAR, CGR and NGR had taken initiatives in the 1900s to provide rail transportation connecting to newly established townships but at that point the commuter numbers were erratic as transition to the new resettlement and transportation was explored. It was only after the NUAA of 1923 that provision of rail transportation for townships was seriously considered by SAR&H. Pirie categorises three phases in railway histories whereby railway business and municipality settlement projects intersect, for black Africans in particular. The first period, 1902 – 1920s, was when the sub-economic fares were implemented for commuters residing in

[293] Pirie, G. H. 'Johannesburg Transport 1905 – 1945,' p. 46.
[294] Pirie, G. H. 'African Township Railways and the South African State,' pp. 290 – 291.

townships and the real commuter fares deficit was absorbed by the various railway entities and later SAR&H. The next phase, spanning the end of the 1920s through to the 1950s, was a period in which SAR&H was negotiating the alleviation of the financial burden of the sub economic fares model by getting the municipalities to also participate and contribute towards the financial deficits of operations for low fare branches. Finally, from 1963 marked a phase in which the guarantees with local municipalities were terminated and the government had the responsibility of covering uneconomic rail transportation costs to the townships.[295]

The second phase marked crucial milestones for the railways in terms of balancing the uneconomic viability of township railways as well as governmental support in regulating road transportation. The economic slump of the 1920s adversely affected development of the railway industry as the importation of the rolling stock from Europe was interrupted by the Great War resulting in the withdrawal of trains affecting especially the townships.[296] A precedent of sub economic fares was set by Pimville and later adopted for other townships nationally, 25 years later it was removed during this phase whereas railways and municipalities went into collaboration regarding the resettlement of black Africans in the townships.[297] Local government guarantees were now enforced through a negotiated agreement between the railways and municipalities. However, this process was not smooth as the two institutions could not reach common grounds regarding the method of planning the resettlements and the necessary transport.

From its previous experience with Langa Township in the Cape, SAR&H wanted to know beforehand the projected numbers of commuters before making a commitment towards constructing a railway extension into the townships. This was to avoid infrastructure lying idle while the housing project was underway, as was the case with Langa. Railway infrastructure was put in place in relation to the housing project completion dates, however, the housing project was only finalised two years later thus affecting the projections of investment and returns for SAR&H. Municipalities on the other hand wanted to first know if the rail transportation services would be available prior to committing to a site and size.[298] Both the municipalities and SAR&H were concerned about the cost-benefit of settlement and transportation for black Africans and wanted to base predictions on the available data from the

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[295] Ibid., p. 284.
[296] Ibid., p. 287 & 'Railway Country: 150 Years of Rail in South Africa.' https://www.transetfreightrail-tfr.net.
[297] Pirie, G. H. 'African Township Railways and the South African State,' p. 287.
[298] Ibid., pp. 289 – 290.

collaborator. Ultimately low fixed rates were agreed upon by railways and municipalities on the basis that road transportation would be regulated so that it did not compete with the railways, as well as surety of the completion of housing construction. Use of the road was reserved for the white population; the Minister of Native Affairs emphasised the importance of rail transportation for townships because "the railway will be the most important and most useful service because it will combat crowding of our European roads by native employees on their way to work".[299] Road transportation for commuters was regulated by the government for the taxi and bus industries, less scrutiny and regulation was enforced on white people involved in the road transportation industry than was the case for black Africans who dominated the taxi industry. Regulation was enforced through the quota certification that restricted free movement of taxis; this follows the 1929 Le Roux Commission that justified railway monopoly for commercial and commuting use.[300] Many black African entrepreneurs involved in the taxi industry were negatively affected by the regulation of competition in the transport industry. However, the inconvenience and oppression of the regulation on the taxi industry also affected many black African commuters who were using this form of transport to commute. Theoretically the agreement to create Joint Technical Committees and Inter-Departmental Committees was sound however, it benefitted the municipalities more as they chose to build on isolated and cheap areas far removed from the city centres and white suburbs. SAR&H had to use its own coffers to build the infrastructure despite the impracticability of the chosen sites by municipalities to build and establish new townships.[301]

The SAR&H Annual Reports from the time of Union through to the 1960s reflect consistent planning for rail transportation provision for townships and for "non-Europeans". In these reports, there are cases whereby new main lines connecting the peripheral locations to the central business district (CBD) were proposed while other proposed rail constructions were for branch lines connecting onto already existing main lines. In all the areas identified for expansion there was a yearly projected population growth which directly influenced the amount of potential commuters to form a new client base. The earlier examples of townships and rail transportation mentioned existed before the dawn of the apartheid era, apart from the hard line approach towards segregation there were minor differences in the operations of SAR&H and township transportation. From the SAR&H Annual Reports, the next section will engage the

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[299] Pirie, G. H. 'African Township Railways and the South African State,' p. 289.
[300] Khosa, 'The Trail of Travelling'.
[301] Pirie, G. H. 'African Township Railways and the South African State,' p. 289.

emergence of rail transportation in Tembisa Township which is linked to the Germiston-Pretoria southern line.

Transporting 'Hope' along the Southern Line

Urbanisation and the creation of Black spaces was a collaborative effort facilitated through railway administrations, mining industries, municipalities and the national government; all these institutions were governed by white males upholding and imposing European ideals. The discussion from the previous section touched on the various challenges and collaborations engaged in the process of the spatial planning and situating of townships as well as the provision of rail transportation. Through the different imposed regulations and residential segregation Acts, many black Africans were pushed to the townships later resulting in the formation of various committees (Joint and Inter-Departmental) tackling the nuanced approach for each municipality and the emerging townships within its district. While it was true that the Joint Committees did bring forth structure in relation to the business and political relationship between the railway entities and municipalities, it was not always that the establishment of townships and its branch lines (particularly those established on the grounds of the Group Areas Act of 1950) were born from these committees. This section will consider the case of Tembisa Township (a translation from isiXhosa meaning a 'Place of Hope') to illustrate the influence of the Southern Line in creating one of the biggest townships in Gauteng today.

Tembisa is a township which is a direct product of the Group Areas Act of 1950 promulgated under the apartheid government. By the time of its emergence, the railway industry and municipality had exposure to the complexities of establishing new townships for black urban Africans and the demands for provision of transportation for the residents. Most townships in the Transvaal in the early 1900s were established in the south-western region as it was catering for the labour demands for the Rand mines and the Johannesburg CBD. These townships were built on isolated land based on two factors, firstly it was cheaper for municipalities to purchase the land which was remote and secondly it enabled the racial segregation and monitoring of black Africans.[302] Along the historic timeline Tembisa is known to have been established and formally recognised as a township in 1957; the planning for the first railway station in the township, however, dates back to the administrative years of the CSAR.

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[302] Ibid., p. 291.

Record shows that in 1903 there was a proposal of establishing Oakmoor station, situated between Kaalfontein and Olifantsfontein, followed in 1909 by a sketch on the Plan of the Station under the CSAR administration. [303] This plan was based on the already existing Pretoria-Germiston Southern Line which was constructed and completed between 1890 and 1893 under the Contractor Lawley who was awarded the tender on 30th August 1890.[304] Oakmoor station was linked to the Kaalfontein station (located along the Southern Line) and branched out from this main line. The linking of the Oakmoor station with Tembisa, then referred to as the Kaalfontein Native/Bantu Location, was revisited in 1957 with the construction of a halt with supplementary bus services located 2 miles away with the proposed date for operations set for 1958.[305] The operational date for the Oakmoor Station coincided with the establishment of Tembisa Township. Oakmoor Station highlights the symbiotic relationship of road and rail transportation when convenient, however, the bus halt was later converted into a railway halt therefore suggesting that the complimentary relationship stretched only insofar as competition was either curbed or controlled. In the case of Tembisa, Oakmoor station is important because it was the first, out of the four stations in the township, to be built and influenced the construction of other branch lines as well as attracting black Africans to settle in the new 'black[306]' location.

The spatial planning and development of Tembisa was based on and influenced by the existence of the Southern Line and the various industrial zones and suburbs it intersects and connects. The township was established as a response to the labour demands of the fast urbanisation of the region; the proximity of transportation access and the case of the sanitation syndrome were influential in the chosen location. As a product of the Group Areas Act, Tembisa was one of the model/designated resettlement townships (as imagined and planned by the apartheid government) for the many black Africans displaced from certain residential zones (predominantly from Germiston, Kempton Park and Edenvale) which were to be reserved for

[303] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, *OAK-OER 369,* Oakmoor, THR 20, Siding, 'Oakmoor, 30/9/1957; 4/10/1957 & 5/9/1958'.

[304] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, *RAI (K) 255 RB, Ref. 3004, 057..8.40,* 'Opening of New Lines: Elandsfontein – Pretoria (W. Transvaal)'.

[305] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, *OAK-OER 369,* Oakmoor, THR 20, Siding, 'Opening of Stations & Sidings CSAR. W.N.34, 15/8/1903' & 'Plan of Oakmoor Station: CSAR Sketch of Stations and Diagrams of Signals, 1909'.

[306] The term 'black' is used to highlight the racialised manner in which the white national identity appropriated space and geography. This acknowledges that space and identity are a social construct facilitated by colonial and apartheid South Africa to marginalise and oppress the Other.

industrialisation or white occupation.[307] Through collected oral histories, Tshepo Moloi highlights that not all black African individuals or families who settled in Tembisa were a product of physical removal or coercion as others moved from nearby squatter camps such as Dindela and Tikkie-line location as well as Alexandra Township.[308] Unsanitary facilities and overcrowding were often the biggest problems for black Africans settled in squatter camps. Often the squatter camps had lower population density compared to the south-western townships because of their location close to the suburban, industrial and residential locations. While it is true that township resettlements were located in isolated areas far from the CBD, Tembisa was an exception as it intercepted and is in close proximity with residential, mining and industrial zones through the Southern Line.

Tembisa was one of the townships that formed part of the Railway Construction Act no. 49 of 1957 at an estimated cost of £1,253,262 for a quadrupling of the line extension.[309] An investigation was conducted for investment in the expansion of railway branches into the townships and was submitted by a Committee comprised of the Germiston, Kempton Park and Edenvale municipalities; the Health Committee of Modderfontein and Lyttelton; the Village Council of Bedford View, and the Health Committee of Irene, Kloofsig, Halfway House, Kaalfontein, Clayville, Industria and Klipfontein for Tembisa.[310] None of these bodies/committees represented or had representatives from the black Africans who were the potential residents and commuters targeted for railway line expansion. This was common practise when it came to urban residential and transportation planning for black Africans as discussed from the previous section.[311] An additional £17,000 was given to the SAR&H by the government in 1958 to cover the unforeseen incurred costs for constructing a halt that connected Kaalfontein to Tembisa along the Southern Line.[312]

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[307] South Africa History Archive. 'Establishment of Tembisa.' Accessed Online, http://www.saha.org.za/tembisa/establishment_of_tembisa.htm and South Africa History Archive. 'Locations before Tembisa, pre-1957.' http://www.saha.org.za/tembisa/locations_before_tembisa_pre_1957.

[308] Moloi, T. 2006. 'Youth Politics: The Role of AZANYU in the Struggle for Liberation: The Case of AZANYU Thembisa 1980s to 1996.' Masters Research Report submitted at the University of the Witwatersrand, pp. 26-28.

[309] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, 'Railway Act no. 49 of 1957', pp. 762 & 764.

[310] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, *U.G. 39/1957,* 'Union of South Africa: Report of the General Manager of Railways and Harbours for year ended 1957.' pp. 28 – 30.

[311] See, Parnell, S. 1988. 'Land Acquisition and the Changing Residential Face of Johannesburg, 1930 – 1955.' *The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers).* Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 309 – 311; Parnell, S. 1988. 'Land Acquisition and the Changing Residential Face of Johannesburg, 1930 – 1955.' *The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers).* Vol. 20, No. 4, pp. 307 – 314.

[312] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, 'Warrant no. 44: Special Warrant of the Governor-General in Pursuance of Section 47 of the Exchequer and Audit Act, 1956'.

While there is nothing unique about the total exclusion of black African representatives from the Joint Committees or Inter-Departmental Committees that were at the helm of the spatial planning of the townships, the consideration of locating Tembisa not too far from the industrial and suburban zones may have been influenced by the low population number, comparatively speaking (see Table 4). The relationship between the population number and the township location may have been interdependent in this regard. However, another factor that may have influenced the establishment of Tembisa in close proximity to the industrial and suburban zones was the high costs incurred by the Railways in constructing branch lines that connected the CBD with isolated townships while offering a low fare for its commuters during what Pirie identified as phase two in the earlier years of the twentieth century. Tembisa also adopted the fixed low fares standard inscribed for rail transportation for townships by the government and SAR&H. The earlier agreements between the railway administration and municipalities can be said to have been somewhat successful when observing the population density in the townships located farthest from the CBD. Most of the south-western townships were one of the earliest resettlement zones used to deal with the urban slum issue. Phase two resulted in the agreement between railway administrations and municipalities in regulating transport competition and standardised low fares for commuters provided that the railway entities would absorb all the costs for rail construction. This was later overturned during phase three when the municipalities had to contribute towards the deficit of low fare economic model after the General Manager of SAR&H requested that railway financing for townships be recast.[313]

Consideration and investment in the establishment of Tembisa, and following through with the proposed plans of Oakmoor from the CSAR, may have been one of the ways that the Joint Committees and Inter-Departmental Committees dealt with the issue of financing new rail construction after adequate exposure to the patterns from the south-western townships. In his dissertation Tshepo Moloi writes that the plot that Tembisa occupies was a farm purchased from Mr J. H. M. Meyer and Mrs M.W.Z. van Wyk and Tembisa was formally established in 1957. Figo Madlala recalls that this new settlement was actually called Vuk'uzenzele (translated: wake up and do it yourself) before the building of the Tembisa Station, which later inspired the naming of the township. After the purchasing of land, the government built houses near the Oakmoor station and Mr Julius Lelaka states that his father was attracted to these

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[313] Pirie, G. H. 'African Township Railways and the South African State,' p. 291.

newer and bigger houses while commuting on the train to and from work and that is how they moved to Tembisa.[314] In a report in 1957, SAR&H drafted a proposal with a plan for a non-European railway branch into Tembisa, which they referred to as the Kaalfontein Bantu Township, with construction for a single line aimed to be completed in 1961and extended to a double line in 1962. Proposed quadrupling of lines were on the Southern Line for Elandsfontein as a measure to ensure that segregation on the railways could be facilitated without much conflict with the sharing of facilities between 'European' and 'non-European' commuters. [315]

Part of the reasons informing the planning and establishment of Tembisa was the demand for cheap labour in the East Rand area due to the active mining plants, the development of an industrial hub via mushrooming factories, fast urbanisation and the emergence of suburbs. The proposal by SAR&H estimated that the commuter railways were meant to funnel out labour of approximately 26,200 passengers into the suburbs and industrial hubs south of Kaalfontein, namely, Kempton Park, Isando and Jan Smuts Airport (now known as O.R. Tambo Airport), Elandsfontein, Edenvale, Bedfordview and Primrose, feeder buses were to handle the fewer labourers going to Modderfontein and Klipfontein; north of Kaalfontein catered for Olifantsfontein, Irene and Lyttleton, see Table 5. The first station into the township was to be located a mile from the south-western boundary of Kaalfontein station. The railway line branched out from the Kaalfontein station into the township where there is a further branching out to the four main stations namely, *Tembisa, Limindlela, Leralla* and *Oakmoor.* Oakmoor station directed traffic towards Pretoria and the adjoining suburbs while the Tembisa station exit joining Kaalfontein directed traffic towards Germiston and its adjoining suburbs. The Kaalfontein-Tembisa-Leralla connection was completed in 1963, with Limindela only joining the party in the 1980s.[316]

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[314] Moloi, T. 'Youth Politics,' p. 27.

[315] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, *U.G. 39/1957,* 'Union of South Africa: Report of the General Manager of Railways and Harbours for year ended 1957.' p. 6.

[316] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, *U.G. 39/1957,* 'Union of South Africa: Report of the General Manager of Railways and Harbours for year ended 1957.

Township	Projected Figures		Actual Number of Commuters				
	in 1957		1962-63	1964-65	1966-67	1968-69	1969-70
	No. of Dwellers	No. of Passengers (per day, in one direction)	No. of Passengers (per day, in one direction)				
Johannesburg (south-western townships)	475,132	217,698	144,000	166,900	185,720	190,920	204,060
Germiston	74,843	38,572	17,000	22,400	24,900	25,600	33,050
Benoni	65,000	28,000	11,300	13,200	15,800	17,300	22,100
Kaalfontein (Tembisa)	67,500	26,200	9,600	15,100	23,870	24,200	32,090
Pretoria	170,520	67,800	32,000	43,600	54,160	58,430	71,210

Table 4: Population Number and Commuters in Townships in the Transvaal[317]

Table 4 shows future projections of the number of commuters that are targeted for the use of the line. Furthermore, it shows the actual amount of commuters that used the railway facility (per day, moving in one direction) for the years 1962-63, 1964-65, 1966-1967, 1968-69 and 1970-71, after the completion of the first extension line in 1961. The table shows a gradual increase in commuters over the decade with 1970-71 exceeding the initial estimated number of commuters at 32,090 commuters per day. Deducing from the figures of 1957 and the knowledge of the continued housing project in the township an assumption can be made that the consumption of the railways as a mode of transportation was directly proportional to the population growth of the township. The projected number of 26,200 is further broken down into labour zones and is estimated in accordance with the housing projects and plans of the municipality. In the proposal for the extension from Kaalfontein Station to Tembisa and the labour zones the SAR&H through the Committee proposed the rebuilding of Kaalfontein,

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[317] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, *U.G. 39/1957,* 'Union of South Africa: Report of the General Manager of Railways and Harbours for year ended 1957.'; 'SAR&H Annual Report of the General Manager 1962-63'; 'SAR&H Annual Report of the General Manager 1964-65'; 'SAR&H Annual Report 1966-67'; 'SAR&H Annual Report 1968-69'; 'SAR&H Annual Report 1970-71'.

Kempton Park and Elandsfontein stations to have separate non-European facilities. These suggested alterations were pre-empted on the basis that population growth will increase as the township expands and more black African families move into the township over the years. The Committee also proposed that the labour zones south of Kaalfontein be provided with feeder buses as there was little justification for construction of a branch extension for the estimated number of commuters. A budget of £200,000 was set aside solely for a bus feeder system. Unlike the taxi industry, the bus industry was (and continues to be) less independent with the municipalities often controlling the administrative and business processes. In the report of 1957, the Committee also highlighted that the railway administration should be indemnified from working costs of these branch extensions.[318]

Labour Zones: South of Kaalfontein	Estimated no. of commuters per day, in one direction	Total
Kempton Park	4,000	
Isando and Jan Smuts Airports	4,000	
Elandsfontein	4,000	12,000
Edenvale	4,000	
Bedfordview	2,000	
Primrose	400	
Klipfontein	400	
Modderfontein	400	10,800
North of Kaalfontein		
Olifantsfontein	3,000	
Irene	200	
Lyttelton	200	3,400
Overall Total		26,200

Table 5: Estimated No. of Commuters from Tembisa to Designated Employment Zones[319]

The emergence of Tembisa railways and other black township railways demonstrates the deep influence and impact of infrastructure on black communities. The name of the township had taken many forms before deriving the official and final name from the Tembisa station. The SAR&H annual reports show that after the completion of the Tembisa and Leralla stations in 1961, the term Kaalfontein and Tembisa were used interchangeably to reference the

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[318] Transnet Heritage Library, Johannesburg, *U.G. 39/1957,* 'Union of South Africa: Report of the General Manager of Railways and Harbours for year ended 1957.
[319] Ibid., p. 6.

location. In forming a township and influencing its identity, railways in Tembisa firstly used the railway infrastructure as a tool to market and sell the idea of resettlement into a geographic location designated for occupation by black urban Africans. The freezing of time within a state of mobility was used to influence the imagination of many urban Africans as they were able to consume space and time within this 'modernising' capsule while commuting to and from work. The strategy and effects of travel within the tourist trips of the SAR&H and consumption of space from a removed-yet-present position was also influential in attracting residents for the area. It was also strategic that the houses were located close to the railway infrastructure thus selling the idea that occupying the space close to this advanced technological infrastructure brought one closer to becoming 'modern'. Secondly, the identity and naming of the township (Place of Hope) as adopted from the Tembisa station, also links railway infrastructure with the prospect that there is 'hope' for the black urban African to become 'modern' and escape the misery of a life of an Other.

Conclusion

Railway infrastructure and industry is multifaceted and multiple histories can be derived from it. The previous chapters examined the role of modern capital in the emergence of rail transportation and the effects of a single sided history of railway history in the archive. This chapter focused more on the railway histories in the early twentieth century and the urbanisation process influenced by the infrastructure resulting in segregationist spatial planning. The irony of the SAR&H administration is its consistent inconsistencies regarding the relationship and intersections of the transport industry and politics. With the Union of South Africa Act the principles of independent business principles governing the operations of the SAR&H were stipulated following the example from the CSAR administration. There were compromises made in the Act that created space for national governmental interventions in the commercial operations of the SAR&H. From experience and observation of European industrialisation it was clear that if South Africa was to follow the western conceptions of modernity that the separation of the industry from politics was imperative. There was an attempt by the SAR&H at adhering to the commercial principles outlined in the Act; industries such as tourism, film and electricity were developed through the influence of the railways. The abovementioned industries were exclusive for white development and/or consumption with the inclusion of the Other as unskilled labour.

Railways may have not directly set the tone for the spatial planning of the black townships in the periphery of the CBD but the presence and potential of the infrastructure facilitated the process of segregationist urbanisation implemented through municipalities. Segregation of residential settlements was motivated by racism and justified using the sanitation syndrome argument. This argument together with the issue of security and safety of white people from black Africans gained enough support from a white dominated parliament and government thus creating a perception that justified the unnecessary financial expenditure towards segregation. The SAR&H was one of the institutions affected by segregationist urban spatial planning of the twentieth century. The agreements between the municipalities and the railways affected road transportation through regulation of the lives of many black Africans who were displaced and had to endure long commutes to work without consultation. Most townships are located at the outskirts of the city and labour zones with commuters using standard low fares which affected the revenue and cost incurred by the railways at the expense of implementing a racist ideology. African township railways were a clear example of how the railways intercepted commercial use of the infrastructure with economic output. For decades the uneconomic model of African township railways has been maintained, even in contemporary instances.

Black communities were not just passive consumers of the space and infrastructure; they did criticise the operations and the conditions of the railway service. Black lives who were working in different sectors were all affected and moulded by the train which determined when it arrived and left. Tembisa was also affected by rail infrastructure because it defined the name and identity of this newly established township as well as being the initial advert that was attracting many families to settle. The concept of crossing time and space faster than normal is potentially one of the ways in which the infrastructure could be used to highlight the possibility for black Africans to get a glimpse of modernity.

Chapter Five

Conclusion: Plural Trails to Modernities

Introduction

The process of (re)imagining plural epistemic knowledges and realisations of modernity in the life and identity of an Other[320] is inherently entangled. Braided within these entanglements is the attentiveness to local particularities and global connections forged through the violent encounter between Europeans and different colonised communities; and how this in turn has created new 'interior' and 'exterior' realities for the European and the Other. In this context, 'interior' and 'exterior' changes speak to the social, political, economic and cultural alterations as influenced and shaped by railways and the industries they intercepted. Modernity does not have a single way in which it manifests; throughout the chapters the discussion has traced modernity unfolding as capital, labour, spatial planning and law. Mignolo argues that it is this constant 'reinvention' of modernity that allows for it to masquerade under the guise of newness.[321] 'Interior' changes speaks to some of the alterations that occurred within each community (the colonised and coloniser alike) as a result of this encounter and its ramifications thereof; while the 'exterior' relates to the institutionalisation and visible implementation of modernisation. As explained by Ntongela Masilela modernisation in Africa necessarily meant westernisation, this will be discussed further throughout the chapter.[322]

When it comes to railway histories and heritage, the identity of the Other as a legitimate contributor towards the modernisation of South Africa is oftentimes obscured, particularly because the Other does not fit the confines of modernity as defined and constructed by western epistemology. This study argues that modernity as a concept is presently conceptualised and structured under the western paradigm and is problematic because its universalist approach is exclusionary to non-white and non-European groups. As argued in chapter three, the railway archive is dominated by the European narrative and the silencing of the narrative and histories

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[320] Within the context of this section, the term 'Other' subsumes within its meaning definitions from various pockets of scholarship that categorise and or define the subject of the marginalised individual/group found in the matrix of coloniality; this includes concepts of the subaltern, creole, blackwoman, exteriority and other identities that are non-Western white heterosexual male.

[321] Mignolo, A. 2007. 'Coloniality: The Darker Side of Modernity.' *Cultural Studies.* Vol. 21, No. 2-3, p. 159.

[322] Masilela, N. 1996. 'The "Black Atlantic" and African Modernity in South Africa.' *Research in African Literatures.* Vol. 27, No. 4, p. 90.

of the Other. The engaged archive and data on railway histories highlights euro-modernity as a concept utilised by the various governments and railway administrators to imagine and conceptualise modernisation and railway construction in South Africa. In so saying, it is important to mention that while this study engages with the broader understanding of euro-modernity, there is an awareness that within the discourse itself exist debates that provide arguments that are not homogenous in their approach or treatment of the subaltern and as such plural responses emanating from the subaltern cannot be expected to be linear. This chapter will engage the empirical content on railway histories in South Africa as discussed throughout the chapters and link it with the theoretical framework of the concept of modernity.

The Maelstrom of Modernity[323]

The argument advanced in this chapter places emphasis on the influence of modern capital, in the form of foreign investment from Europe, as the cornerstone for the unfolding of euro-modernity in South African railway and infrastructure histories. Railways were a pivotal component in shaping the South African economy during the transition from an agrarian to industrial/capitalist economy during the nineteenth century. It comes as no surprise that the change in the economic dispensation overlapped with the change in the social and cultural identities of the people directly and indirectly affected by this infrastructure development in South Africa and its surrounding regions. Political differences between the republics and the colonies did contribute towards the emerging years of railway constructions and development as the geographic planning of railways was highly influenced by the mining epicentres of Kimberley and the Witwatersrand in the Cape Colony and the SAR as well as the active economic zones in the case of Natal and the Orange Free State.

The earlier histories that engage the emergence of railways in South Africa seldom examine the influences of modern capital in the cultural and social identities of people and instead lend too much focus on the bureaucracies of railway administrations and diplomacy. Granted the knowledge of the functional, operational and administrative methods of the railway industries are important to consider, however, railway infrastructure not only occupies the geographic space, it simultaneously extends into forging social identities as well as enforcing western epistemologies in imagining the past, present and future of the people (both subaltern

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[323] The term 'maelstrom of modernity' is borrowed from 'Masilela, N. 1996. 'The "Black Atlantic" and African Modernity in South Africa.' *Research in African Literatures.* Vol. 27, No. 4, pp. 88 – 96'.

and coloniser) of South Africa.[324] Through photographs, railway infrastructure is shown to cross different dimensions of time and space by juxtaposing the traditional against the modern by consistently making the comparison between European and African people and the physical environment.[325] Time and space is controlled using western conceptualisations and epistemologies; the black African person is oftentimes represented as either frozen in time or lagging behind while the railway infrastructure features as a tool or machine that is to deliver the black African person into the world of civility and modernity provided they assimilate into western culture and thinking. In one of the images discussed in chapter three (Picture 14), the SAR&H deliberately uses a photograph of blackwomen carrying buckets on their heads moving across an open field with a train moving behind them. They are shown as frozen in time (traditional) in a world that has now extended itself beyond the bounds of tradition and into the supposed future. The narrative of time for rural people and their environment is that it is frozen and unmodern and this gaze specifically appeals to Enlightenment perceptions of Africa as 'primitive' and existing outside of Hegel's "universal history".[326] NZASM and the SAR&H have an archive filled with photographs that appeal to a European audience; for NZASM this narrative was targeted at the investors in Germany who had an interest in the industrialisation of the SAR and the SAR&H moulded its narrative with the European tourist in mind. This narrative of frozen time for African societies is historically flawed when considering the encounters of African communities with the European settlers; the colonial wars are such an example to dispel the notion of passivity among the black African communities as receivers of modernity and civilisation post the colonisation of their lands. If it were that an argument is developed using the very tenets of western logic it would still be difficult to consolidate how Beings existing in the future (through time) are able to contest using militia the environment and resources (space) of Beings frozen in the past. The lack of soundness in this narrative/argument is one of the means that expose the inadequacy of universalist conceptualisations of modernity since the very essence of erasing the subaltern from history cancels the impact of euro-modernity and its philosophy as a civilising agent

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[324] See, Foster, J. 2003. ''Land of Contrasts' or 'Home we have always Known'?: the SAR&H and the Imaginary Geography of White South African Nationhood, 1910 – 1930.' *Journal of Southern African Studies.* Vol. 29, No. 3, pp. 657 – 680

[325] Ibid., p. 660

[326] Thomas, L. M. 2011. 'Modernity's Failings, Political Claims, and Intermediate Concepts.' *American Historical Review.* University of Chicago Press. p. 727

because it impossible to modernise/civilise that which does not exist within your immediate time and space.

Time is constructed and controlled slightly differently for the black African person living and existing in the urban townships. Black African persons living in the urban townships are assumed to have been touched by modernity in one way or the other, either through their commute from their homelands into the urban regions using the railways or through exposure to industrialisation as labourers. Railways designated for township commuters were characterised with poor service, over and above the control of movement of black African persons in and out the townships by installing a limited schedule, trains often arrived late in the already remotely located townships. Abstractly speaking, western time (represented by the train schedules) can be understood as engineered towards making the black African person appear as lagging behind and late for the modernisation process, what is commonly referenced as 'African time'.[327] The spatial planning of townships is one of the undersides of modernity as it located the black African persons at the periphery of the industries and economic epicentres, labour zones, schools/education and potential access into technological resources and development, the abovementioned points are cogs that could potentially allow for the process of assimilation to occur. The poor services of scheduled trains often meant that many black African labourers had to arrive late at their respective places of employment or explore other modes of transportation which often included using taxis as an alternative.[328] As discussed in chapter four, regulation of competition in the transportation industry, through the Motor Carriers Act of 1930, in favour of the railways had an adverse effect on the taxi industry which was mostly dominated by black African entrepreneurs. This observation, on how the government through legislation and the railway administration through infrastructure used power to oppress black African persons, suggests that the engineering of the term 'African time' is laced with many ambiguities, entanglements and hidden historical origins and ramifications.

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[327] There are multiple ways in which 'African time' can be engaged and explained however for this section engagement with the term will be limited to the parameters of time as an abstraction as well as an empirical tool used to measure and regulate movement of commuters using Gregorian time for tracking train schedules.

[328] See, Pirie, G. H. 1987. 'African Township Railways and the South African State, 1902 – 1963.' *Journal of Historical Geography.* Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 283 – 295; and Khosa, M. M. 1998. ''The Travail of Travelling': Urban Transport in South Africa, 1930–1996.' *Transport Reviews.* Vol. 18, No.1, pp. 17-33.

What can be deduced from the data discussed in the preceding chapters in support of this argument is that 'African time' in the lives of black African people living in both rural and urban areas can be firstly understood as 'interrupted' through forced migration and displacement, and secondly as intentionally engineered to exist outside the bounds of both history and modernity. In a segregationist and apartheid nation, the black African person (and other subaltern groups) bore the brunt of the modernising project that advanced the needs and development of the European settler using euro-modernity in South Africa. The dominance of euro-modernity exists in so far as the political, economic and social power is controlled by the European coloniser, however, that is not to say that other forms of modernity such as black modernity were not unfolding parallel to it.

In *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty observes the imbalance in the exchange of epistemes between western thinkers/writers and thinkers/writers from the communities of the Other. He notes that the proclivities present in the institutionalised modern form of knowledge production privileges western thinking with the space of abstracting universal epistemologies that subsume all Beings whilst being ignorant of the existence of the Other (as a valid Being). This is evident in the treatment and erasure of the Other from strategic positions in the writing of railway histories in South Africa thus privileging the European narrative, particularly during the nineteenth century when much of the discussion on railway infrastructure and development was based on political and economic tensions between Kruger and Rhodes. He (Chakrabarty) further states that it is essential for the Other to use European thought, which is both indispensible and inadequate, to imagine and think themselves out of the limitations of political modernity – a conceptual position that Walter Mignolo identifies as the zone of border thinking.[329]

This approach of using European logic as a means to escape the confines of (un)humanness of the Other was one of the methods used by black South African intellectuals of the early twentieth century to conceptualise and imagine modernity. Ntongela Masilela argues that the reinsertion of the black South African in the diasporic modernist articulations was through connecting the existence of the black South African person with that of the African American person using the historical link of the 'Black Atlantic' argument as advanced in Paul

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[329] See, Mignolo, D. 2013. 'Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing: On (De)coloniality, Border Thinking, and Epistemic Disobedience.' *Confero.* Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 129 – 150.

Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic.*[330] The structure of the western archive neglects to recognise the black South African intellectuals who were actively involved in forging and imagining their own identities and realisations of modernity. These included black African thinkers like Solomon Plaatjie, H. I. E. Dhlomo and Charlotte Maxeke among many others.[331] Conceptualisations of black modernity in South Africa during the 1920s and 1930s paralleled parliamentary debates conducted by white officials that justified racism and segregation in the Union of South Africa and the varying degrees of racial classifications within the country anchored on the tenets of euro-modernity. White South Africa was engaged in an exclusive discourse on the lives of black South Africans without consultation, particularly within railway histories and the cultural and social imprints on the lives of black African persons emanating from this permanent infrastructure on the geography as well as the minds of affected societies. These debates referred to black African people not as contributors towards modernity but instead as labourers/cogs necessary in enabling the realisation of euro-modernity in the African continent to advance and develop the European settler. Post the South African War, Lord Alfred Milner, a British commissioner, had strong beliefs that the British had a moral right to rule over all other races and ethnicities, including the Afrikaners;[332] this quasi moral superiority has been used to justify heinous violence enacted on the Other. He (Milner) wrote to Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, a politician and financier of the mining industry in the Transvaal, in November 1899 saying that, "[t]he *ultimate* end, is a self-governing white community, supported by *well-treated* and *justly-governed* black labour from Cape Town to Zambesi".[333] It is important to understand that "well-treated" and "justly-governed" is to be understood under the parameters of euro-modernity that engages the Other as a sub-human group therefore locating the subaltern Being outside the bounds of ethical implications reserved for humans. Milner's administration of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony further complicated the discussion on who is modern/non-modern by shifting towards differentiating the whiteness of the British and Afrikaners. For Milner, modernity was analogous to British-ness thus locating the Afrikaners at the exteriority of this strand of modernity. The Afrikaners were impoverished after the South African War thus relegating their existence in the "waiting room of modernity". The CSAR played an important role in addressing white poverty through the employment of unskilled Afrikaner labour for the railways, however, in spite of experience the Afrikaners always

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[330] Masilela, N. 'The "Black Atlantic" and African Modernity in South Africa.' p. 89.
[331] Ibid., pp. 90 – 91.
[332] Thompson, L. *A History of South Africa,* p. 140.
[333] Ibid., p. 144.

assumed positions higher than those of black African labourers. The years after the South African War and before the Union of South Africa in 1910 may have been tricky for white South Africans, however, despite the historical tensions that between white South Africa the racial structure and oppression was maintained from the colonial period through to segregationist and apartheid South Africa.

Legislation such as the Pass Laws, Railway Regulations in the Union of South Africa Act of 1909, Natives Land Act of 1913, Natives (Urban) Areas of 1923, Group Areas Act of 1950 and the Native Resettlement Act of 1954 among other oppressive laws passed by the colonial, segregationist and apartheid governments to dehumanise black African lives therefore justifying the expendability of black lives in the industries that depended on black African labour. Because the conceptualisation of black modernity by black South African intellectuals drew much of its principles from the experiences of the African American in the maelstrom of modernity it too falls short in accommodating black African labourers in the discussion of modernity.[334] Political autonomy of the black African community tended to dominate the narrative of black modernity, coupled with Christianity and education to the extent that W. E. B. Du Bois referred to Charlotte Maxeke as "an apostle of modernity".[335] It was not wrong that some of these black intellectuals adopted assimilation into European epistemologies as a means to demonstrate the humanness of their Being, however, this narrow approach to black modernity continues to perpetuate the exclusion and erasure of other black Africans who are not formally educated and are not believers in the Christian faith.

The black African labourers discussed in chapter three do not form part of the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle of black modernity as conceptualised by some of the black South African intellectuals. This shows that there is no linear or universal alternative manner in which epistemological universalism of euro-modernity can be contested. This study argues for a pluri-versal approach towards modernity that will enable the insertion of the Other in the past and history by acknowledging the participation of black African persons in the realisation of railway infrastructures and identities in South Africa. The back African labourer in the railway industry engaged in unskilled labour is seen to exist outside the parameters of euro-modernity and black modernity in South Africa because the archive has recorded their presence as traditional and frozen in time and space. It is disingenuous to think of these black African

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[334] Masilela, N. 'The "Black Atlantic" and African Modernity in South Africa.' pp. 88 – 96.
[335] Ibid., p. 92.

labourers as existing outside of modernity based on their race despite them occupying the space and replacing the labour and work designed for white Dutch labourers (for NZASM in the construction of the Eastern Line) who are considered to exist as modern and historical Beings. Investment of modern capital in South African railways also came with the importation of skilled and unskilled labour from Europe as a way of 'spreading' euro-modernity over and above just the material and operational components of railway infrastructure.

There are decolonial critiques of euro-modernity and to a lesser extent black modernity; the decolonial critique of black modernity is anchored in its derivation from principles of euro-modernity. The underpinnings of euro-modernity and its violent erasure of the Other is essential as part of understanding how historicism itself was developed and used as an enabler for European domination over many parts of the world in the nineteenth century.[336] Furthermore, it explains the diasporic articulations of black modernity which influenced black South African intellectuals. Mignolo and Dussel discuss the other side of euro-modernity (a darker and uglier side) that exists within the empirical world, that goes beyond self-generated knowledges and abstractions, and considers the experiential realities of the Other within the colonial matrix of power. For Dussel, the spread of euro-modernity to colonised communities resulted in multiple forms of genocide, existing in colonial zones of the:

> economic-political-hegemonic world (fratricide), of the [E]urocentric communication community (filicide), of the phallic eroticism which castrates women (uxoricide) and last but not least, the subject which uses nature as an exploitable mediation for the valorization of the value of capital (ecocide).[337]

Drawing from the discussions from the chapters of this study, fratricide is observed through the displacement and migration of peoples and communities using militia and trains by colonial armies and governments; uxoricide is observed through the absence of blackwomen's narratives and stories in the archive, especially relating to railway and infrastructure histories, yet their bodies are used as a representation of tradition and 'backwardness'; and ecocide in the manner by which modern capital highly influenced the developmental trajectory of the railway industry thus affecting other economies that are not dependent on modernisation or

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[336] Chakrabarty, D. *Provincializing Europe,* p. 7.
[337] Dussel, E. 1996. *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor and the Philosophy of Liberation.* Translated and Edited by Eduardo Mendieta. Humanities Press, New Jersey.

industrialisation. Both Mignolo and Dussel highlight the irrationality of euro-modernity as it refuses to accord ethical considerations to the Other despite its ontological claims towards principles that should be universally applicable to all Beings. Within the North-South dialogue, euro-modernity exposes itself as Janus faced in its refusal to accord the Other the space of Being and the potential of conquering the Self as argued in black modernism. This is not to say that the Other has the desire to exist within the constructions of western time and space, but rather it is aimed at exposing instead the false promises of euro-modernity that justifies the barbarity of violence and exploitation as a necessary civilising middle passage. Consider the manner in which black African labourers were depicted as semi-dressed labourers lacking any individual identity amidst the 'black masses' when photographed next to the railway infrastructure. Sanya Osha describes this intrinsic contradiction of euro-modernity as linked to the morass of the unclear logic for hegemonic domination marred in European cultural elitism, secularism and Christian cosmology.[338] While these Eurocentric institutions of modernity advocate for structures of democracy and the advancement of humankind's relationship with science and ecology, in praxis they are utilised as oppressive tools on the Other in settler colonies.

Ramon Grosfoguel argues that the logic and grammar of euro-modernity arises from the zero-point philosophy inherent in Cartesian solipsism. This point assumes two types of universalisms; firstly, as utterances, knowledge is detached from spatio-temporal determination and claims to be eternal; this becomes the direct replacement of the Christian (G/g)od. Secondly, in the epistemic sense, a subject's enunciation that is detached and emptied of body and content. In both instances, the place from which this knowledge is fabricated and spoken is not questioned because it self-generates. This self-generation, void of a physical body, has its locus embedded in the imaginings of western Europe and its geopolitics.[339] While it is true that even the non-modern and those existing in the exteriority of euro-modernity can locate themselves within the universalist abstraction of this dual Self[340], the limitations that

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[338] Osha, S. 2011. 'Appraising Africa: Modernity, Decolonisation and Globalisation.' *Philosophy and African Development: Theory and Practice*. pp. 169 – 170.

[339] Grosfoguel, R. 'Decolonising Post-colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political Economy Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality.' *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of Luso-Hispanic World.* Vol. 1, No. 1.

[340] There is a large body of work available that critiques Cartesian solipsism, it can be found from the loci of European scholarship (i.e. feminist theories, Marxism and etc.), and the literature from the Other communities (i.e. Decolonial theories, subaltern studies, African philosophy and etc.) that have dealt exhaustively with the limitations that exist within Dualism.

become barriers towards this self-actualisation is that the passage through which a Being needs to travel to reach this metaphysical point ultimately has to reflect a western European heterosexual male. Of course, within western philosophy those who succeeded Descartes, from Immanuel Kant through to Karl Marx, expanded beyond this detachment of the mind and body. They, however, maintained the premise of the zero-point philosophy that further alienates the Other from the position of ever self-actualising within this Cartesian Self and by extension into historical consciousness and modernity. For many Enlightenment thinkers,[341] modernity would be characteristic of the conquering of the Self and the environment by overcoming what Kant refers to as "the immaturity of man"[342] and through the colonisation of Africa, Asiatic and the Americas in an attempt to civilise these Other communities. This civilising mission would be enforced on the colonised communities either through Christianity or at times through violence that fuelled the politico-economic machinery of mercantilism.[343]

Through Grosfoguel's engagement with the concept of modernity and its oppressive nature, violence is the consistent thread within the tapestry of euro-modernity and its realisations through European expansionism and colonisation. For the railway histories examined the violence of euro-modernity is anchored in the dehumanisation of the black African persons and labourers (as well as other subaltern groups) through legislation, forced displacement, migration and culture. The governments of South Africa carried and justified their racist and segregationist policies on the back of euro-modernity. Violence in the context of the railway histories examined in this study as influenced by modern capital is two-fold, as displacement of communities in the physical placement of the railway infrastructure as well as segregationist spatial planning for urban black Africans settled in remote townships. Secondly, it unfolds as erasure/muting of narratives of black Africans from the compilation of the archive and orchestrated pictorial depictions of black lives; the erasure of engagement with the

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[341] Through Enlightenment philosophy and historicism European thought inherited a central position within modernity. However, it is important to note that European thought had several centres of power within itself. Thinkers such as Kant, Hegel and Marx existing in cosmopolitan societies, that had a heterogeneous composition in race, class and gender, intentionally erased and alienated all other Beings existing in the exteriority of this abstracted Truth. Therefore; the uni-versalism of modernity and history were constructed on foundations that innately alienate all Beings that do not mirror the image of the Cartesian Self.

[342] Chakrabarty, D. 'Provincializing Europe', p. 101.

[343] See, Grosfoguel, R. 2012. 'Decolonising Western Uni-versalisms: Pluri-versalism from Aime Cesaire to the Zapatistas. *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of Luso-Hispanic World.* Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 88 – 104; and Grosfoguel, R. 'Decolonising Post-colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political Economy Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality.' *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of Luso-Hispanic World.* Vol. 1, No. 1.

discourse on black modernity by South African governments is a mode of violence used to disregard and dehumanise the existence of the black African person, they thoughts and their encounter with the railway infrastructure, as well as its extended ramifications. The pictures used to depict black African experiences with the railway infrastructure by NZASM and SAR&H are shown to be concerned with highlighting the stereotypical conceptions of the image of Africa as a 'dark continent' that lacks a history and a past.

Modern capital within the histories of railway infrastructure in South Africa can be said to have unfolded under the guise of the Cartesian Self which was realised through the period of railway diplomacy before the South African War. It is important to note that the Cartesian Self, as argued by Grosfoguel, represents the European heterosexual male; there is a lot of available literature that interrogates the gender, racial and class critiques to Cartesian Solipsism which will not be engaged in this concluding chapter. Railway diplomacy and the negotiation thereof were conducted between the English and Afrikaner white men holding power in their respective regions, namely the SAR and the Cape colony. In the Sivewright Agreement of 1891, that led to the completion of the Southern and Eastern Line, the main stakeholders that were influential in the finalisation of the agreement that loosened the economic and political tensions between Kruger and Rhodes were white men, as mentioned in chapter two. The railway archive is dominated with the histories of white heterosexual males and their understanding and engagement with the railway infrastructure from a political, social, economic and geographic perspective. Gordon Pirie's work on railway ganging also highlights this lopsided patriarchal narrative by acknowledging the lack of written and collected data on the white women who were involved in communities where railway ganging was practised and how their participation and role in railway histories.[344] Railways, through the imagination of euro-modernity and Cartesian solipsism, are a gendered space and their histories are extremely masculine.[345] Women in general are excluded from literature that looks at the engagement and interaction with technology and railway infrastructure; there is a lot of work that can go into the investigation of how women have used the railway space to become socially and economically emancipated, among other experiences and engagements with the space.

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[344] See, Pirie, G. 1993. 'Railway Ganging in Southern Africa, c. 1900 – 37.' *The Journal of Transport History.* Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 64 – 76.

[345] Taska, L. 1999. 'Technology, Work, Gender and Citizenship at the Eveleigh Railway Workshops Precinct: An Historical Interpretation of Landscape, Identity and Mobilisation.' *Labour History.* No. 76, p. 158.

Conclusion

The discussion on the maelstrom of modernity in South African railway histories has highlighted the limitations of a universalist epistemological conception of euro-modernity and the failure to implement its principles in praxis. There are plural ways in which modernity manifests, however this study engaged and contested euro-modernity since it formed a central part in the various South African governments in the imagining and sculpting of the processes of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. This study examined the unfolding of modernity in different ways within economic, political and social dimensions of railway histories spanning from 1860 to 1960. The timeline explored was intentional since it engaged the various conditions of black African encounters with the railway infrastructure; namely as labourer in the nineteenth century and as consumer/commuter in the twentieth century. Reasons informing this approach towards the histories of railways in South Africa are based on the lack of data in the archive that traces the black African narrative and encounter with the infrastructure and the ramifications and changes that follow. Black Africans are neglected from the histories that look at technology, science and energy despite their presence and participation in these pasts as consumers and contributors. A weakness of such an approach is that the histories of each period can only be explored at a surface level, particularly histories involving the social, economic and cultural manifestations of railways and black Africans that are not fixated on the political only. There is definitely room for further research to be explored in South African railway histories that look at how science and technology affects the daily lives of black South Africans. Many studies on South African historiography look at migration but more research could be dedicated towards investigating transportation and mobility histories, as well as the various industries or economies that emerge as a result, of black African persons who are settled in regions that are not popularly researched.

Regarding the theoretical framework, the argument of this study is that black Africans are as central as white people in the modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation of South Africa despite the deliberate exclusion of black African pasts by the colonial, segregationist and apartheid governments. The argument advanced is that a shift away from universalism to pluriversal imaginings of modernity creates space for the Other to locate themselves within the discourse of modernity. A pluriversal epistemological approach to modernity manages to address some of the limitations and critiques of black modernity as conceptualised by black South African intellectuals. It is through pluriversalism that black African labourers, blackwomen and black African societies can be reinserted into the discourse of modernity and

railway histories. This is done with the understanding that there is no linear manner to approach modernities since the infrastructure is entangled with other external factors. Due to the scope of a dissertation the study was able to only scrap at the surface of railway histories in South Africa and modernity and further exploration on the subject could yield fascinating historical as well as philosophical epistemological outcomes.

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