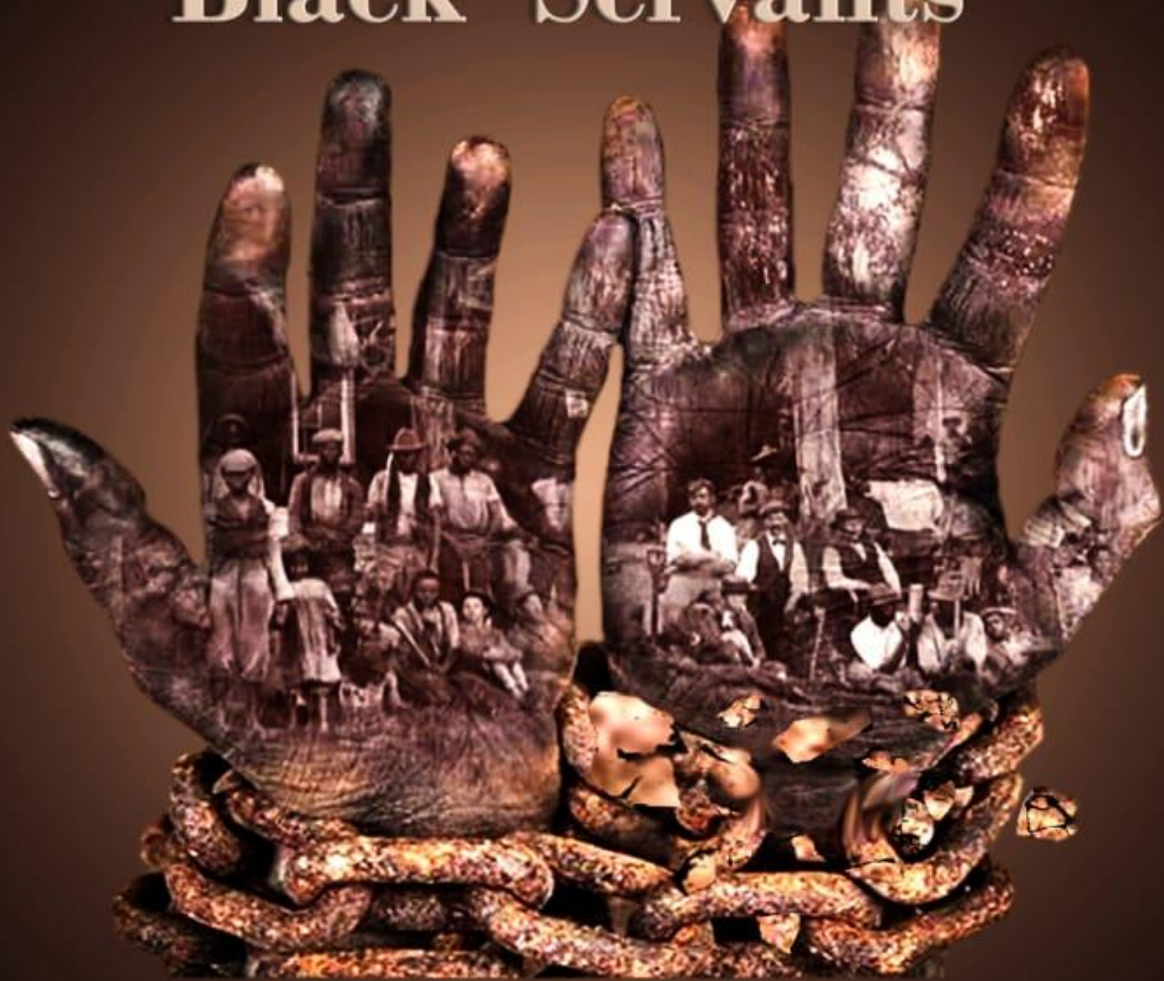


Un-Silencing Histories of Black 'Servants'



at Zwartkoppies Farm:

A Transition From the Sammy Marks House to the Sammy Marks Museum

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DECLARATION

I, Motsane Getrude Seabela, hereby declare that the work on which this dissertation is based is my original work, except where acknowledgements indicate otherwise. Neither the whole work nor any part of it has been or is to be submitted for another degree in this or any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates traces and historical origins, socio-economic, political and cultural lives of black ‘servants’ who worked and lived at the Zwartkoppies farm and other establishments owned by Sammy Marks through photographs, oral history and archives. Furthermore, I interrogate the notion of representation by exploring the house as an object of colonisation and the site as exclusive and perpetuating divisions in a democratic South Africa. The decision to employ oral histories is so as to give these servants the freedom to represent themselves in a space where their voices have been muted in their presence. The history of labour in sub-Saharan Africa serves as my point of departure so to better frame my research. This study reflects on the effects of colonisation and apartheid characterised by injustices and marginalisation which to this day still are reflected in the silenced narratives of our dark history.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC: African National Congress

DMSA: DITSONG Museums of South Africa

DNMCH: Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History

DSMM: Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum

ILO: International Labour Organisation

NCHM: National Cultural History Museum

NFI: Northern Flagship Institute

NHRA: National Heritage Resources Act

NLA: Natives Land Act

SAMA: South African Museums Association

SMM: Sammy Marks Museum

UCT: University of Cape Town

VOC: Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company)

WNLA: Witwatersrand Native Labour Association

KEYWORDS

Apartheid

Slavery

Labour

Servants

Colonisation

Sammy Marks

Representation

Oral History

Photography

Racism

Space

Decolonisation

Zwartkoppies

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RESEARCH AIM

This dissertation aims to highlight the silencing of narratives of black people, in spaces that were previously under colonial authority, in this case the Sammy Marks Museum situated at the Zwartkoppies farm. I examine how the marginalisation continues to exist post-apartheid. Through this research, I hope for a continued discourse on this subject matter especially as far as Sammy Marks and his family's relation with black labour is concerned. By faithfully engaging in discourses that confront injustices of the past will shift us towards a better South Africa. Through this research I hope to contribute to the oral, labour and visual studies by offering an expanded presentation of a narrative that has deliberately been put on mute, that is, of the 'black' servants.

I intend to translate this dissertation into an exhibition which I ideally wish to host in three locations: Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum, Ditsong Cultural History Museum and the University of Pretoria. I hope the exhibition will serve as a platform to join in engagements of the need for the oppressed to tell stories through their own voices and for the urgency of a reform of public spaces such as museums. Gradually we will move towards rehabilitation and restoration of the past.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

I am aware of the problems and complexities pertaining to the use of racial terms such as ‘black’, ‘African’, ‘kaffir’, ‘native’ and ‘Bantu’. Although most of these terms were ultimately denounced post-apartheid, due to the context of this study, I believe it is necessary to use them so to highlight the different periods of the South African society. To contextualise the periods in which my dissertation examine, I deliberately use the term ‘black’ to refer to those who are also classified as ‘African’, ‘coloured’ and ‘Indian’. Thus my whole dissertation is saturated with racial terms and categories. I grew up being called black because of my darker complexion and then in the new South Africa being referred to as “black” and “African” synonymously and interchangeably, as a result I struggle with racial categories. Nonetheless, I will expand on the racial and ethnic categorisations of people according to their skin colour (O’Connell, 2012: 16) and geographical location in the later chapters.

The term ‘servant’ will be employed throughout my thesis to refer to workers or labourers who worked for Sammy Marks and his family. Servant is used in this study to refer to all black people who worked for the Marks family in any way of form and to demonstrate the extent of generational captivity and servitude endured by these workers who had almost no alternatives at their disposal. Servant is a very common word with a variety of meanings, all implying a greater or less degree of inferiority and want of freedom. It is most frequently used as the equivalent of ‘slave’ with its various shades in position¹.

¹See, Bible Study Tools. <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/servant/> [Online: 29 September 2018]. Also see Genesis 9:25; 24:9; Exodus 21:5; Matthew 10:24; Luke 17:7

CHAPTER OUTLINE

CHAPTER 1

SAMMY MARKS AND THE BUILDING OF AN EMPIRE

This chapter outlines the life of Sammy Marks, his family and how he built his businesses and amassed the wealth in South Africa. This will also include his life in Russia and the United Kingdom and ultimately his arrival in South Africa with specific focus of the Transvaal.

CHAPTER 2

UP FOR SALE TO THE LOW BIDDER: AFRICAN MIGRANT LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA

This Chapter will explore a historical background of migrant labour in South Africa and zoom in on Sammy Marks as an industrialist and his role in the exploitation of black cheap labour. The chapter also highlights various legislations such as the Native Labour Act of 1893 that was designed specifically for black labour control and which coincide with significant periods of Sammy Marks wealth accumulation. The Native Labour Act for instance, was formed and passed during an intensified period for black labour demand which accords with recruitments that were taking place in Swaziland and used in Sammy Marks coal mines in the Vaal (Mendelsohn: 1991).

CHAPTER 3

EXCAVATING ‘BLACK BODIES’: AN INTERROGATION OF THE SAMMY MARKS PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

In this chapter I will investigate not only photographs of black servants who worked at the Zwartkoppies farm but also those who were stationed at other establishments such as coal mines in Vereeniging, Orange Free State whose images are in this collection. In this chapter I will attempt to bring to life the

frozen multiple configurations that are embedded in photographs. Here I will expand on the issue of migrant labour.

CHAPTER 4

‘SERVANTS’ HISTORIES THROUGH ARCHIVAL IMPRINTS AND NARRATIVES

This chapter examines and traces the histories of ‘servants’ through archival records and oral histories. Here I deal with the issue of child labour and forced removals in Zwartkoppies and discuss how the colonial and apartheid laws were enablers of the violations of “black” people’s human rights. I do so within the context of oral histories provided through interviews. This chapter intends to bring to the fore the unrecorded histories of servants through their voices and those of their descendants which will fill the gaps in the archives.

CHAPTER 5

NAVIGATING PLACE AND SPACE AT THE SAMMY MARKS MUSEUM POST-APARTHEID

This chapter will look at the question of space and belonging and representation in a museum as a public space. I will also deal with the issue of transformation and Decoloniality of formerly colonial space with focus on the Sammy Marks House and now a museum.

CHAPTER ONE

SAMMY MARKS AND THE BUILDING OF AN EMPIRE

Archives capture history in so much as they enshrine the history of those who have been privileged enough to write and record it. By taking into account diverse viewpoints, and broader, more inclusive curations, it is possible to re-assess the archives monolithic status, and break free from the trap of viewing archives as the single repository of historical truth telling (Sealy& Dufour: 2017).

It became clear that non-Europeans were a necessity for the economic progress of the country, however, could not receive the same wages as Europeans or claim any political or social rights with the Europeans in the European areas (Brookes, 1968 8-9):

INTRODUCTION

I first came to know of the name Sammy Marks in December 2006 during a visit to my sister Pheladi in Pretoria. This was so because my sister stayed close by a square named after the man. Having grown up in Limpopo Province South Africa and schooled in the province, there was nothing in my area that was named or associated with the name Sammy Marks; thus I had less interest as to who the person was. The second time I heard of something named after Sammy Marks, was in 2008 during an induction subsequent to my appointment as an intern in the research section of the Northern Flagship Institute's (NFI) National Cultural History Museum (NCHM), now Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History (DNMCH). This was brought to my attention because the house that belonged to Marks is one of the eight museums amalgamated first in 1999 then later in 2010 to form the Northern Flagship Institute and DITSONG Museums of South Africa respectively. Even after the induction, there was never a point between 2008 and 2018 that I developed any keen interest to know more about the man. It was only after being appointed acting manager of the Sammy Marks Museums in February 2018 that I developed an itch to pay more attention.

I had just enrolled for a Masters in Heritage and Museum Studies which deals with topics of our history that many still are afraid to confront. Upon arrival at the Sammy Marks Museum, I had to confront issues of space and belonging, racism, colonisation and marginalisation which are still alive at this museum. I found myself grappling with navigating this space within which, as a "black" person, I could not find anything to identify with. It was only through the discovery of a photographic collection in a small archival room that I found photographs of black working men; one of them captioned "Stables and Kaffir Compounds Zwartkoppies". The first question that came to mind was: "Who were these people and where did they come from?" This moment resonated deeply with Nick Shepherd's *The Mirror in the Ground: Archaeology,*

Photography and a Disciplinary Archive where he challenges us to consider approaching history through a photographic lens wherein which the image is closely interrogated for “possibilities that may open up other sources of information apart from written texts” (2015: 8). This book is invaluable in that Sherpard demonstrates how photography is able to capture what can be omitted during an ethnographic or a landscape study. He contends that, in an archaeological or ethnographic fieldwork, the camera captures not only the materials being excavated, but rather the moments and people whom we can later revert back to for answering of questions. Therefore, Sherpard encourages the use of photography in deciphering the past.

Following the discovery of this photographic collection, I then embarked on a journey to inquire about the black working men in the photographs. However, I saw it fit that I begin this journey by exploring the life of Samuel Marks, the man whom these ‘servants’ worked for. Although it was not difficult to gain access into a corpus of Sammy Marks’s archival material housed at the University of Cape Town’s Jagger Library, the deteriorated letter books from 1882 to 1894 were a great hindrance to access information on Marks’s life. As a result I relied heavily on Mendelsohn’s (1991) book titled the “Uncrowned King of the Transvaal” which is possibly the most extensive publication that outlines the life of Sammy Marks. From this publication it appears that Mendelsohn must have had the opportunity to access the letter books most likely while they were still in a much readable state. Post 1894 almost all letters were through typewriters thus, easier to read.

This chapter outlines the life of Samuel Marks, his family and how he built his businesses and amassed wealth in South Africa. I deemed it significant to depart by first introducing Samuel Marks, the creator of Zwartkoppies Farm, the site at which my study is located. Furthermore, the chapter serves as a genesis to

which the chapters that follow draw from as a basis for examining black servitude under the Marks family.

SAMMY MARKS ARRIVES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Samuel Marks, commonly known as Sammy Marks² arrived in South Africa at the peak of colonisation and migration. He was born on 11 July 1844 in Russia at a small Russian frontier community on the border between the Tsarist Empire and East Prussia (Mendelsohn, 1991: 1). In 1861 before his 18th birthday, Marks left for the north of England. It is here where he joined Sheffield, a steel-making company which had at the time of his arrival been reinventing and positioning itself as “the cradle of steel industry”. From the money he was making, he would use for peddling, which was common practice for young Jewish immigrant men like him (Mendelsohn, 1991: 6-7).

Marks headed for South Africa in 1868 and arrived in the Cape Colony to discover what had been described to him as “an attractive destination for young men with narrow means”. He was later joined in Cape Town by Isaac Lewis, a distant cousin who would later become his business partner. Together they bought carts and horses which they headed for Kimberly on upon the discovery of diamonds in 1871 (Mendelsohn, 1991: 6-7). It was also in 1871 that Sir Henry was sent from Britain to consummate Cape self-government subsequent to which Lord Kimberly asserted that the Cape as Mother Colony had the responsibility and was powerful enough to absorb the un-annexed territories on its borders. Also, the Cape could attract Natal and Republics into its orbit to make up a confederated group; thus it did not need the interference by the British Government. Therefore, according to Kimberly, despite the British Government being the principal, he had hoped that it would withdraw from

² Sammy as opposed to Samuel is used in various literature and place names named after Samuel Marks thence even today the man is being referred to as Sammy Marks. See Mendelsohn: 1991, Naude: 2003 & Davenport: 2013. The square in Pretoria city centre is also called the Sammy Marks square.

South African Affairs. Consequently the Cape indeed absorbed Basutoland³; however it refused to annex the diamond fields (De Kiewet, 1937:12).

The discovering of diamonds marked a great shift from a totally agricultural economy towards industrialisation. Here both the Dutch and British government were less interested in territorial segregation, but rather urged Africans to move into European spaces so as to meet the labour demands which white labourers could not meet. Cecil Rhodes, the mining magnate who in 1890-1895 became the Prime Minister in the Cape Colony, levied trifling tax to Africans in the reserves so as to force them to seek employment in the white areas (Daniels, 1989: 331). This period also coincided with the setting up of the 1871 Commission on African Labor in the Zuid Afrikansche Republiek (ZAR) which focused on investigating complaints on African subservience and labour shortages and problems of African labour to white farmers (Bergh, 2002: 40-42).

THE DISCOVERY OF MINERALS

The first diamonds are said to have been “picked up on the banks of the Orange River, near its junction with the Vaal in 1867 by a hunter named O’Reilly and Schalk van Niekerk...who took it for analysis to a chemist in the village of Colesberg, more than a hundred miles away...which the chemist pronounced to be worthless” (Marquard, 1955: 178).

Van Niekerk then sent it to Dr. Atherstone in Grahamstown who then reported that it was a first -class diamond. Two years later an African ‘witch-doctor’⁴ found a stone for which, to his astonishment, Schalk van Niekerk gave him 500

³ Basutoland gained its independence on 4 October 1966 from being a British Colony and today is called Lesotho.

⁴ Traditional healers were referred to as ‘witch-doctors or wizards’ due to their training and healing practices. My employment of the term in this study is to demonstrate and contextualise the period in which the diamonds were discovered. See Browne’s *Witchcraft and British Colonial Law*, Hund’s *Witchcraft and Accusations of Witchcraft in South Africa* (2000: 384-387). Witchcraft Suppression Act No 3 of 1957 and Witchcraft Suppression Amended Act No 50 of 1970.

sheep. This was the famous ‘Star of South Africa’ which was sold for £11, 000 and resold for £25,000, and the great diamond rush had begun. These were the alluvial diggings. Here diamonds could be found in the gravel and sand, and could be worked by individual diggers using ‘primitive’ equipment. Soon the river diggings were exhausted, but by 1870 and 1871 more diamonds were picked up twenty-five miles east of the river at Dutoitspan, Bultfontein, De Beer’s, and most famous of all, Colesberg Kopje which would later become Kimberly, named after the Secretary of State of Colonies (Marquard, 1955: 178).

Men came from all over the world to seek their fortunes in this flat and arid land: Boers from the Transvaal and Free State; clerks from Cape Town, Stellenbosch, and Wellington; artisans and shopkeepers from the coastal towns; Australian and American prospectors and miners; men from the sands and Africans who came not to seek great fortunes but to work for enough money to buy a rifle or more cattle. After the diggers, came publicans, lawyers and well-dressed diamond buyers from London and Paris. They came on foot and on horseback; from Cape Town they came by ox-wagon, taking three months over the journey, by mule-cart, or by horse-drawn post-cart if they could afford the £40 fare (Marquard, 1955: 178).

It can be said that the rise and supremacy of monopolistic structure of mining was affected and tested at the Kimberly Diamond fields. The discovery of diamonds in Kimberly provided a platform for the experimentation of mining capital, labour and the capitalism that came to dominate the mining sector. When diamonds were discovered in South Africa, exploitation was easier as the surface they were found on fitted the category of small scale mining. “All that was required in the digging out of this precious stone was a shovel, a pick, buckets and one or two black labourers”. As the depth of the digging deepened, so did the dangers of mining increase as the mines became flooded with water

and rocks falling. These dangerous working conditions heightened demand and dependency on black labour (Davenport 2013: 109-110). “It is this attitude that black bodies were for labour that shaped Marks’s thinking in South Africa and would influence how he later viewed and treated his servants in his home and other establishments”⁵.

Before the advent of the great mineral revolution in the latter half of the nineteenth century, South Africa was a mere backwater whose unpromising landscape was seemingly devoid of any economic potential. The region’s economy was rudimentary, being almost entirely dependent on the agricultural sector, which itself was considerably through harsh climatic conditions. It was a land without millions and millionaires, no man dreamt of making fortunes in such an unforgiving country (Davenport, 2013: 1).

The sentiments held by Davenport (2013) depict a clear disregard of the precolonial societies’ efforts in mining and other activities associated with civilization through which the missionaries and colonial authorities conducted vigorous investigations. These colonial authorities in South Africa selected information that would later form part of their archives and other early historical accounts (Woodborne Pienaar & Tiley-Nel, 2009: 100 & Hamilton, Mbenga and Ross, 2010: 4). These discoveries of South Africa’s mineral resources coincided with the world stage of industrialisation where connections through trade were the order of the day. This was also during the period of intensified rule by the British imperialists (Davenport, 2013: 2). Prior to 1883 there were speculations which highlighted a Russian menace in the colonial newspapers. Since 1871 the newspapers frequently published in a vague fashion the German threat. Towards the end of 1882 the British Government was more afraid of Russia and France than Germany due to Russia’s colossal expansion in Asia and

⁵ This was Dr Nadia Kamies’ comment in one of our discussions.

an altercation in Madagascar, on the Niger and Congo (De Kiewet, 1937: 310). The likes of the arch imperialist Cecil Rhodes who arrived in South Africa in 1871 to join his brother who was engaged in cotton growing in Natal, ushered in the Scramble for Africa that led to a heightened imperial period (Jameson, 1897: 3).

It is irrefutable that mining activities in Southern Africa took place during the precolonial era with much of the archaeological evidence been wiped off by colonial and post-colonial events. Conversely, Davenport (2013) holds that mining history should commence from only 1652 as this period marked the official documentation of geological and mining activities in Southern Africa. It was during this period that the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC)-Dutch East India Company appointed Jan Van Riebeeck to occupy the Cape of Good Hope and establish a settlement at the foot of Table Mountain. Upon settlement, Van Riebeeck and his crew met local natives whose language was regarded as peculiar and later they named these people ‘Hottentots’ or ‘Hotnots’ which translated the stammering nature of their language. After a short while these natives to whom the settlers felt superior, were then called “lazy Hotnots” as a result of them being uninterested in working for Europeans (Brookes, 1968: xv; xvii). The primary interest of the VOC was to find deposits of gold; consequently “they sent out their best miners and assayers to focus on the fort, specifically Devil’s Peak, Table Mountain and Lion’s Head. However, investigations showed that there was little evidence of gold mineralisation” (Davenport, 2013: 7).

MARKS AND THE EXPLOITATION OF MINERALS

By mid-1870’s Marks and his cousin Lewis had already bought their first mining claims, but could not accumulate more due to restrictions per digger. After the lifting of this restriction, the two acquired more claims. In 1877 Marks and Lewis combined their claims, along with other diamond merchants and

formed the Kimberly Mining Company. A short while after, the government of Orange Free State commissioned George William Stow, a self-taught geologist and rock art practitioner, to do a survey of the minerals in that area. In the process he discovered coal (Mendelsohn, 1991: 11). When Sammy Marks, then a prosperous Kimberly diamond magnate of the firm Lewis and Marks received news of Stow's mineral investigations and his discovery of coal in the Northern Free State and adjoining Transvaal, he quickly realised the importance of the find. Consequently, Marks "arranged to meet with Stow to discuss the possibility of floating the coal to Kimberly in flat bottomed boats" (Leigh, 1968: 17). Marks saw this as an opportunity due to the demand of coal in Kimberly as the only easily accessible fuel was for the diamond mines' indigenous thorn bush which was rapidly consumed. Following the meeting between Marks and Stow was the formation of a company in 1880, called De Zuid Afrikaasche en Oranje Vrijstaatsche Kolen en Mineralen Vereeniging,- South African and Orange Free State Coal and Mineral Mining Association which was formed specifically to exploit coal (Leigh, 1968: 17).

The association was formed by a group of investors so as to acquire coal-bearing farms. These investors included prominent local diamond merchants and claimholders Thomas Lynch and Samuel Paddon, the Parisian brokers Herz, Fils et Compaigne, as well as Jules Porges and his partner Julius Werhner. After registering the South African and Orange Free State Coal Mining Association, together the group had a nominal capital of £75 000 in the Cape Colony in 1880 (Davenport, 2013: 193). The association also registered under the Dutch title, Die Zuid Afrikansche en Oranje Vrystaatsche Kolen en Mineralen Vrye. Vereeniging later to be known as Die Vereeniging appointed Stow to be manager and offered him a 10 percent stake in the venture after the final registration of the Association. Stow was tasked with the purchase of promising farms in the Vaal Colliery. Farms were bought at both sides of the Vaal River,

one being in the Transvaal, the other in the Free State. Two-thirds of the 95 000 acres of farmland bought was rich with coal. It was estimated that one acre contained approximately 1564 tons of coal. Mining started on Leeukuil farm on the Transvaal side and would then become part of Bedworth Colliery. Due to the extent of coal found at this farm, the Association experienced high demand for labour. At the commencement of operation the company had eight white and eighteen black workers to one hundred and twenty by May 1882 (Davenport, 2013: 193-194).

MARKS IN THE TRANSVAAL

Sammy Marks arrived in Pretoria in 1891 just days after the Pretoria Convention was signed between the British and the Boers. His visit to Pretoria was to discuss the Vaal River Coal Mine and for this colliery Marks relied on black labour from Mozambique in the 1890s. In 1893 the Native Labour Department was set up by the Chamber of Mines that would focus on the resources in the Transvaal. The department was formed specifically to recruit black labourers from Mozambique⁶ (Prothero, 1974: 384-385). During this time the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) had gained powers and monopolised the recruitment of black labourers. Almost all mining companies had joined this association and companies which were not members were barred from employing natives independently. The mining industry in South Africa was flooded with native labour from Mozambique, chiefly because the Portuguese Government benefitted greatly in monetary terms. For the importation of every native labourer, the Portuguese Government charged the South African Government. Additionally, the labourers had to pay a certain fee

⁶ Following was the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) “commonly referred to as ‘Wenela’ followed. Wenela was set up in 1900 and its role in the initial stage was to recruit from Mozambique for various industries, however, was later restricted to gold mines and the recruitment also expanded to other parts of Southern Africa. See (Houghton, 1978: 403).

to the Portuguese Government every month (The South African Native Races Committee, 1909: 28-29).

Despite its remoteness, Marks seemed to find Pretoria very attractive, as it ticked all the boxes as far as an ideal Victorian town is concerned. With all the gardens, gentlemen's clubs and hotels, Marks was very happy with this environment and the more time he spent here, so did prospects to stay increase. Shortly following his arrival in Pretoria, Sammy Marks established a distillery at Hatherley farm called Eerste Fabrieken and stayed in a hotel while the factory was being built, then later moved into the factory's bachelors' quarters.

ZWARTKOPPIES FARM

After the completion of the Eerste Fabrieken distillery factory, Marks decided to buy a farm which was for personal use as he was about to get married. The farm was called Christian Hall, located adjacent to Hatherly farm and belonged to Cockcroft of Dordrecht in the Cape Colony. The Christian Hall was underdeveloped and reflected scars of the 1880-1881 Boer-Brit battle through the dilapidated farmhouse (Mendelsohn, 1991: 33).

Following Marks's purchase of the farm, a transfer took place in 1884 and its name changed to Zwartkoppies. Hatherly and Zwartkoppies farms were located along the railway line, with the harbour of Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) called Delagoa Bay during the times of Marks and Paul Kruger. The same railway formed the backbone of Paul Kruger's ideal transport network linking the Transvaal to a harbour other than Durban or Cape Town. The railway line to Lourenço Marques was regarded as being the shorter route, thus more economically viable. From Pretoria the railway line passed Eerste Fabrieken leading eastwards to the farm Pienaarspoort which was located at the point where the railway line cuts through the Magaliesberg (Naude, 2003: 146).

MINING, FARMS AND BANKS

Like many mining scavengers, Marks wanted to lay his hands on the Witwatersrand gold. Unfortunately, his England based partner, Lewis, could not lend him enough money to secure a gold mine. By 1880, Marks and Lewis had sold many of their Kimberley claims, branched out into the Eastern Transvaal and invested in Du Toit's Pan and Sheba Gold Mining Company in the Barberton District (Rosenthal, 1970: 115). Apart from mining, Marks had a number of ventures in other areas, such as the Transvaal Republic's Nationale Bank which was established in 1891 and later called Barclays National Bank in which he, along with his partners, had a stake. Later in 1894 the partners acquired a sizeable stake in the South African United Breweries from which the South African Breweries Limited was formed. In 1895, Marks and his partners bought coal-bearing farms in Belfast and Witbank areas of the Eastern Transvaal. Additionally, in 1895 was the acquisition of the Transvaal Fruit and Meat Preserving Works in Pretoria. Also, Sammy acquired the Glass Works in Pretoria which was opened by President Kruger on 28 November 1895. In 1902 the Imperial Cold Storage & Supply Company Limited was also established in the Transvaal. It was immediately after these ventures that Cecil Rhodes visited Marks at Zwartkoppies and his neighbouring farm that he was encouraged to open his own fruit farms in the Cape to which Marks helped Rhodes in obtaining the suitable expertise and management. Marks's role in farming was recognised in 1911 when he was appointed Vice President of the Witwatersrand Agricultural Society. During his time in farming Sammy encouraged the Jewish Youth to go into farming⁷.

⁷ The publication was compiled by Sammy Marks's grandson, Neil Maisels and given to guests as handouts at the opening of the Sammy Marks Museum on 12 November 1986. The copy of the booklet is part of the unprocessed material of the Marks Papers Additions at the Jagger Library of the University of Cape Town.

While most of Marks's ventures were successful, there were also others that failed, such as attempts to obtain a concession in 1894 to build piers in the Lourenco Marques harbour so as to export South African coal. Another failure was in 1897 when Marks and Lewis tried to have their Vereeniging Estates Company develop a firm and sell the extensive concessions obtained in Swaziland which could have resulted in it being exploited like Rhodesia. The project failed in 1906 after Britain created a protectorate of Swaziland. By 1904 the company owned multiple farms and was ranked in the top five land owners in the Transvaal. In a letter written to Marks, Lewis suggested that the lack of income production stemmed from the recent war⁸ which had left the white farming community devastated as it allowed blacks to free themselves from the control of power white farmers exercised over them. Although Marks's partner Lewis approved of farm purchases by Marks, he was not in favour of his schemes for redeveloping their extensive portfolio of urban properties. "The firm held potentially valuable sites throughout central Pretoria and embarrassingly occupied by what Marks termed *shanties* " (Mendelsohn, 1991: 156-157).

Additional to the many businesses and properties Marks owned and had shares in, together with Lewis; the two were involved in the exportation of wool from the farm under the Vereeniging Estates that was sold in England by Lewis. In a letter written to Lewis dated 28 October 1907, Marks related as follows:

...let me know if you wish the wool from Vereeniging Estates to be sent to London, I think the company might draw on you at the rate of 7d, per 1b, and the balance could be remitted as soon as the wool is sold. The company might have about 100 bales and if you should want a few more,

⁸ The 1899-1902 South African War

I think I could perhaps arrange with some farmers here for a further 50 or 100 bales⁹.

Marks also acquired a company house in Parktown, a Johannesburg suburb which the family moved into in 1909. Another property obtained was the Hatherley House in Muizenberg which was used as a holiday retreat house. Sammy Marks visited Cape Town in 1895 so as to recover from what had been a most stressful but profitable year in which his wealth grew. He had hoped that the seaside would do him good, hence his choosing of Cape Town. It was predictable that Marks was prone to be attracted by stories of Muizenberg becoming the darling of the wealthy. He was immediately drawn there and quickly purchased a number of properties. He invested in a number of plots of land on Beach Road which would then be followed by the purchasing of Teutonic House situated in Rhodesia Road. The house was, however, not the same as many of the grand homes of the wealthy, though large but an unattractive house and not on the beachfront but was situated alongside the railway line. The house was later renamed Hatherly House, after the farm where his early investment, the Eerste Fabrieken Distillery was originally built. Today the house has been converted into small apartments and still survives as Samenkomst along with part of the original decorative wrought iron fence (Davis, 2013: 21). In the same location, Muizenberg lived the arch imperialist Cecil John Rhodes who also died here. Some of the common features between Rhodes and Marks are that, both had lived in England before settling in South Africa, although Marks was born in Russia. Marks arrived in South Africa in 1868, while Rhodes followed in 1871 (Becker, 2017: 68, Jameson, 1897: 1-3& Mendelsohn, 1991). Although in different times, the pair came to South Africa with one common goal, and that was a search for wealth which they accumulated through the exploitation of minerals.

⁹Sammy Marks Papers. Letter book B.2.29. June 1907- June 1909 Index. Jagger Library Special Collections, University of Cape Town.

A LOBBYING NEST

Sammy Marks was undoubtedly a grandmaster in lobbying and realised earlier the political advantages of hospitality. The guest book at this Zwartkoppies home read as though it is a roll-call of Pretoria's elite due to the number of guests hosted which included Marks's Boer friends and other associates that visited Pretoria. These friends and associates included Randolph Churchill whom Marks hosted in 1891, H.M. Stanley November 1897 and his close friend President Paul Kruger in 1886. Marks also hosted many of the Boer generals, including Koos de la Rey, Christiaan De Wet, Jan Smuts and Louis Botha. Due to a neutral stance pertaining to his relationship with the Boers and the British, in addition, Marks entertained Lord Milner, Lord and Lady Roberts and their two daughters, General Pole Carew and the British Military Governor Major-General John Maxwell (Noomé, 2006: 86).

The Zwartkoppies farm served as a stop for many who visited Southern Africa. Paul Kruger is said to have been a frequent visitor, while Cecil John Rhodes visited this country estate in early 1890 in his capacity as the premier of the Western Cape. Marks's neutral position regarding the Boers and the Brits is further depicted in his simultaneous friendship with both Kruger and Rhodes who was his principal antagonist. Here he assumed the position of a classic Jewish immigrant who was an outsider and as such Marks did not let any political convictions hamper the pursuance of his adventures (Mendelsohn, 1991: 100-101).

'SERVANTS' AT ZWARTKOPPIES

Like many affluent people, Sammy Marks had an army of servants. White servants were mostly imported from Europe and stationed in various rooms of the house for different purposes. Marks was of the view that white servants were much better servants than native servants, as white girls are more

respectable to their counterparts. These views were expressed in a letter between himself and Mr Miley wherein he held that:

Domestic servants, I think, will displace native girls if they come out. In the first place native girls are not trustworthy and their morals, as a rule, are not of high standards. In the second place their demands are so few that they are very independent, and if their demands are not met, they go away and live in their kraals¹⁰.

It is not clear as to how many black servants Marks had, but Mendelsohn stated that at one stage Marks sent to Durban for ten ‘Mandras Coolies’¹¹ to work in the orchards and for two good, steady, reliable and trustworthy Zulu boys to work as Night Watchmen¹². After the South African War¹³, Marks brought a governess from Europe to look after the children. While in Cape Town he sought for a Malay couple for Zwartkoppies; the husband would be responsible for the stables while the wife was to do washing. White housemaids from England often rebuffed to perform duties which were considered ‘kaffir’¹⁴ work’ even though they willingly fulfilled them while in Europe (Mendelsohn, 1991: 183-184).

¹⁰ Contained in a letter SM B/2.17, S Marks-Mr Bailey, 1901.05.30. from Sammy Marks to Mr Bailey, currently housed at the Jagger Library, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

¹¹ This is a term that was used to refer to Chinese labourers. See the 1909. South African Native Committee’s *The South African Natives*. 25.

¹² The use of the word “boy” was employed to refer to black males by their white employers irrespective of age or experience. This was just another way of degrading black people. Africans were called John, Jack or Jim and had the most menial jobs. See Odendaal, A. 1993. "Even white boys call us 'boy': Early Black Organisational Politics in Port Elizabeth. *Southern African Histories*. 20. 11.

¹³ Also known as the Anglo-Boer War. See Porter (2000: 633) & Nomeé (2006:98)

¹⁴ The word “kaffir” in its broader sense was used to include all the dark-skinned “tribes” of South Africa. At first its use was confined to Natal (Kidd, 1904: v). Today the use of the term “kaffir” to refer to a black African is a profoundly offensive and inflammatory expression of contemptuous racism that is sufficient grounds for legal action. The term is associated especially with the era of apartheid, when it was commonly used as an offensive racial slur, and its offensiveness has only increased over time. It now ranks as perhaps the most offensive term in South African English “Kaffir.” *The Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*,

CONCLUSION

This chapter is the basis of the next four chapters in that by giving an overview of Sammy Marks and his life, it will enable one to comprehend his connection with the South African historical background of migrant labour in chapter two, the servants who worked at Marks' different establishments in chapter three, the narratives of the descendants of servants in chapter four and how the remnants of his colonial legacy cemented by apartheid are still entrenched at this museum post-apartheid in chapter. I deliberately opted not to use photographs in this chapter as my dissertation is on black servants whose pictures are currently trapped in boxes as opposed to those of the Marks's which in are found in almost every publication relating to the Markses.

CHAPTER 2

UP FOR SALE TO THE LOW BIDDER: AFRICAN MIGRANT LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA

To give the non-Europeans the franchise would be to give them political supremacy, to grant them economic privileges on a par with the Europeans and that would mean that cheap Native and Asiatic labour would soon replace European labour and drag the European standard of living to that of the Native and Asiatic...more than all races, the Afrikaner fears the black man and the Asiatic. It is from them that he sees the greatest threat of his self-preservation (Dvorin, 1952: 4).

INTRODUCTION

I grew up knowing that I have an uncle, a brother to my mother, who left home in the late 1940's to work in *makgoweng*¹⁵ but had never met him, and this is how I first heard of migrant labourers, although I didn't understand what that meant at the time. My mother had three other brothers who had already returned home from *makgoweng*, unemployed and had little to show that they ever worked; I will get to them later. Although I was still young in the late 1980's and early 1990's just before the demise of apartheid, I found it strange that my uncle spent so much time away from his family and wondered about the type of work he did, or if he even missed his family. In trying to get to know and understand the kind of a person my uncle was, I could only rely on the stories my mother related of them growing up. My uncle worked for *makgowa*¹⁶ as a 'garden boy'¹⁷ and they passed on things they didn't make use of anymore, such as carpets and clothes which he would subsequently send home through *mmethiša*¹⁸ van, my mother related. Although my uncle was married, his wife and children remained home in the rural areas while he was away working and were not even allowed to visit. I suppose that was due to the fact that, as far back as the last decades of the nineteenth century, Kimberly and Johannesburg were regarded as no places for women, and even later, when industrial towns began to draw African labour, men were hesitant to take their families with them to live in overcrowded slums where tribal dignity, good manners, and discipline faded (Marquard, 1955: 191).

After working for *makgowa* for almost fifty years, my uncle eventually came back home with little to show, just like the other three uncles. Two of the uncles

¹⁵ Translated "place of the whites" in Sepedi language, anyone who worked in Johannesburg and Pretoria was presumed to be working for the whites hence the place was and to date called "makgoweng". Also see James, D. 1992. I Dress in this Fashion, Women, the Life Cycle and the Idea of Sesotho. *African Studies Seminar Paper*: 11.

¹⁶ Makgowa is a term used by Sepedi speakers, which to refer to white people.

¹⁷ Blacks who worked for white people.

¹⁸ A vehicle that was used to transport parcels from Johannesburg to Polokwane.

were said to have been released from their duties due to ill health in the early 1980's, as it was common practice for migrant labourers to be sent back to homelands once they got sick (Weinberg, 1981: 28). My uncles would, as a result, rely on assistance from my parents. My mother worked as a teacher who, after obtaining her certificate from a teacher's college in the 1970's, resumed her studies in 1989 then graduated with a Bachelor of Education and Bachelor of Honours Education in 1993 and 1995 respectively. She was also the head of department at her school; so that meant better remuneration. My father had over twenty-five years working in the South African Police Force as a detective; therefore my parents did not struggle to provide for us and two more families. The taking in of extended families and neighbours was not new to me and my siblings, as my aunt, her husband and their four children had stayed in my home, the same with my uncle, the younger brother to my father. I and my siblings had learnt to share; thus we knew and trusted that our parents would take care of everything and everyone, which they did, as usual. It was only later that I got to understand why my father only took leave during the "ten days" school holidays and on Christmas day. My father had to take every opportunity to work overtime in order to provide for everyone. Although my mother continued with her studies because of her love for school and books and self-development, this was also so, I believe, to be able to provide for us and my uncles' families. My parents also had a ten hectares field used to plough corn. Unlike the few people in the village who would hire people to assist, my parents gave us no option as far as the process of ploughing up to harvesting was concerned. Only much later did it become apparent that my parents took strain in providing for everyone, so I figured they must have made other sacrifices so that everyone was taken care of. Subsequent to the demise of apartheid my uncles qualified for social grants and that must have alleviated the load my parents carried.

My father had been a policeman¹⁹ since early 1960's but, before that, he worked at the firms in Johannesburg. My young naïve self often was left baffled as to why it was that even though my father and uncles worked for *makgowa*, my father seemed to have been getting better treatment than that of my uncles'. Well, only as I grew older I could understand that the difference was that my father was employed by the white government, while my uncles worked for white citizens for whom my father vowed never to work for because of a traumatic experience that he went through as a young boy. My father recalled that, when he was ten years old, his youngest brother got very sick and as the eldest he had the responsibility to care for him. During this time my grandmother, my father's mom, was working in Polokwane city for *makgowa* and did not come home to check on her child. After months of battle with sickness, my father's brother eventually died. A telegram was subsequently sent to my grandmother to which she responded by saying that: "makgowa would not allow me to come bury my child". This incident had undoubtedly left a deep wound in my father's heart; hence he promised himself to follow any profession that was available for black people at the time, but working in white people's homes or farms.

People in my village, Ga-Kgole and surrounding villages such as Thune, Mamphaka would always get into a celebratory mode whenever migrant labourers came back home, either during Easter or December holidays. The whole village would know that a specific person from *makgoweng* has returned home. Others would come home once a year or in two years, while others would spend more than five to ten years or even more without seeing their families.

¹⁹ Although my father and I never had conversations on how it felt like working as a policeman during apartheid I can only imagine the uncomfortable space he must have been in having to choose to work as a policeman because he did not want to work in a white person's home like his mother and uncles did. After trying to distance himself from migrant labour later through empowering himself by being a policeman, he still found himself confronted with the harsh consequences of it [migrant labour] when he had to take care of my uncles.

And then the latter type of a migrant labour would be labelled *lekgolwa*²⁰. For families whose members were now *makgolwa*, the Easter and Festive holidays were to a greater extent a sad period. Like my uncles, most if not all of these migrant labourers returned to their rural homes for their families to take care of them with little to show that they ever worked. The general attitude towards these former migrant labourers was that they either blew their money on women or alcohol, hence their financial status. Little did most of us know that these men worked and stayed under dire conditions, yet they still endured and held on until they returned to their families.

This chapter will explore a historical background of migrant labour in South Africa and highlight Sammy Marks's role in the exploitation of black cheap labour. The chapter also examines legislation that was designed specifically for black labour control which coincides with significant periods of Sammy Marks's wealth accumulation. The Native Labour Act which was formed in 1893 and passed during an intensified period for black labour demand accords with recruitments that were taking place in Swaziland and used in Sammy Marks coal mines in the Vaal (Mendelsohn: 1991). This chapter and the two chapters to follow are saturated with what would in today's terms be regarded as problematic terms such as, 'native', 'kaffir', 'African', 'black' and 'tribe' emanates from the period in which my study is located, that being colonisation and apartheid. This chapter ties with the next as it forms the basis on how the servants of the Marks family came to be situated in his different establishments.

²⁰ This term would be used to refer to people who have spent many years in Johannesburg or Pretoria areas without returning home. So *go kgolwa* means to be forgotten thus *lekgolwa* translates to the one who never returned home from work in Johannesburg and Pretoria. See James, D. 1992. I Dress in this Fashion, Women, the Life Cycle and the Idea of Sesotho. *African Studies Seminar Paper*: 11.

CONTROL OF BLACK LABOUR

The first slaves to arrive in the Cape came from Madagascar, Mozambique, Angola and Ceylon, then followed the Indonesian prisoners of war. These slaves performed all the menial and hard labour such as domestic work, agricultural work and as stevedores who handled the cargoes in the harbour (Meli, 1989: xiii). By 1806, it was reported that there were 29,361 privately-owned and government slaves in the Cape Colony. These were slaves and their descendants imported from 1658 to 1803 (De Kock, 1958: 203). The bill for the abolishment of slavery in the Cape Colony became law on 28th August, 1833. 1st December, 1834, marked the official ceasing of slavery within the British Empire. Slaves of over six years were to be apprenticed for four or six years to their employers and subsequently their working hours were to be reduced to 45 per week (De Kock, 1958: 207). Freed slaves became significant agents of social, cultural, and religious change in Africa. Due to Christian indoctrination and emotional connections with their African ancestral heritage, ex-slaves in Britain and America provided much of the motivation for missionary contact with Africa in the nineteenth century. Consequently some returned to Africa as missionaries (Maxwell, 2013: 79). Kamies (2018: 21) is in unison with (Maxwell, 2013) in that, although mission stations offered sanctuary to the enslaved after emancipation, it is important to note that Christianity perpetuated racial slavery of people with a darker complexion. As a result of ideologies held by Christians, of the Dutch Reformed Church in the South African context, the church laid the foundation of conceiving and executing apartheid.

The control of African Labour movement dates back to 1834 after the abolition of slavery which resulted in perpetual labour demands brought by the discovery of diamonds and gold. In 1893 the Native Labour Department was set up by the Chamber of Mines that would focus on the resources in the Transvaal. The department was formed specifically to recruit black labourers from

Mozambique. Succeeding was the Rand Native Labour Association which was installed to supply mines with labour force but also guaranteeing that there would be no competition between mines. The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association “commonly referred to as ‘Wenela’ followed. Set up in 1900, Wenela’s role in the initial stage was to recruit from Mozambique for various industries; however, it was later restricted to gold mines and the recruitment also expanded to other parts of Southern Africa (Prothero, 1974: 384-385; Houghton, 1978: 403).

Wenela became a powerful body with a lot of influence. Some few years after its inception it had devised a system of carefully collecting labour. In 1907 Wenela had obtained no fewer than 100,082 natives from the Transvaal, Swaziland, Bechuanaland, Cape Colony, British Central Africa Protectorate and Mozambique. The highest number of recruited labour was from Mozambique, with 47656. One of the reasons for obtaining Mozambican labour was that they stayed on a job for long and that they did not mind working underground. For that reason, they became a most preferred area of recruitment. Apart from both the South African and Mozambican Governments benefiting from these recruitments in monetary, the labourers also had to pay a fee to the Mozambican Government per month (The South African Native Races Committee, 1909: 29).

As a form of labour control in South Africa, African labourers were recruited to work, but never on a permanent basis or allowed to bring their families along. This was so as to ensure that they did not occupy areas which were reserved for Europeans, but also, to make certain that they had no organised labour force, and to break up the family unit. The Chamber of Mines emphasised that wages of African labourers needed not be increased for that would result in these labourers taking too long to return to the mines. Thus, paying them little wages ensured their return to the mines within a short period (Houghton, 1974: 403).

By 1936, 58 percent of the black labour force consisted of South Africans. However, the reopening of recruitment in the north saw the numbers dropping to 22 per cent in 1973 (Yudelmand & Jeeves, 1986: 101). During the 1930s there was an even greater expansion of the Wenela recruitment which extended to Bechuanaland (Botswana), Nyasaland (Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), Angola and South West Africa (Namibia). These recruitments were accompanied by provisional labour agreements between South Africa, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1938. Those agreements were replaced in 1947 by the Inter-Territorial Migrant Labour. In 1965 there was a new agreement entered into by Nyasaland and South Africa, which was later substituted in 1967. In 1959 Tanzania declared it illegal for its citizens to work in South Africa and officially ceased with recruitments in 1961, followed by Zambia in 1966 as a form of protest against the apartheid government. Malawi supplied migrant labourers to South Africa constantly, irrespective of criticisms from its neighbours. This continued arrangement with South Africa was due to the economic dependence and it was only in 1974 that Malawi withdrew its 120 000 migrant workers (Prothero, 1974: 388; Massey, 1983: 431; de Vletter, 1985: 667). It is apparent that, even though Malawi withdrew a large number of its migrant labourers, some remained as in the case of James Kwenda who appeared in the list dated 25/1/78 of Bantu staff who worked under Joseph Marks at Zwartkoppies Farm. Kwenda is also recorded as having been in this area since 1/1/53 as stipulated in the form he filled so as to continue working in the farm in line with Section 26 of the Bantu Labour Act 67 of 1964, or section 12 of the Bantu Urban Areas consolidated Act 25 of 1945²¹.

In the 1970's a major shift occurred to the composition of the black migrant labour force to the South African gold mines. Many viewed these changes as merely a movement from foreign to local sources, either as a result of certain

²¹ The documents are part of the Sammy Marks Additions, Box 31, envelope 1-Zwartkoppies Title Deeds & Servitudes, Jagger Library University of Cape Town.

labour frontiers being closed to South Africa or because the South African state was imposing a policy which focused on labour supplies from local areas (Yudelmand & Jeeves, 1986: 101). By 1971 reports showed that foreign African labourers totalled more than half a million. This figure was said to have doubled since the first decade of that century. This labour force was recruited mainly from Mozambique, Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria and Kenya. The system of recruitment, transportation and employment was regarded as one of the highly sophisticated models in Africa and undoubtedly in many parts of the world. This form of labour force recruitment came about to cater primarily for the needs of the South African mining industry. Its roots emanated from the need for labour in the early stages of development of the South African mining industry which was an expansion of emphasising the racial policies of apartheid (Prothero, 1974: 383). By mid-1985 the pattern had once again been transformed and South African blacks accounted for 60 per cent of the labour force. Not all foreign workers were affected by the changes that took place since 1974. While there was a substantial cutback from two major foreign suppliers, Malawi and Mozambique so was a great increase from Lesotho. Lesotho which, though legally a foreign supplier, because of its close proximity to the Orange Free State gold-fields than any other major supplying area was by virtue more dependent on mine migrant labour than any other supplying area (Yudelmand & Jeeves, 1986: 101).

It is worth noting that even before the discovery of diamonds and gold in 1860, there was already a system in place designed by the colonizers to utilise black migrant labour for different purposes in the development of wealth. Migrant labourers were recruited both locally and from the entire sub-Saharan region.

Locally for example, Bapedi men from the then Sekhukhuneland²² worked on the farms of the Cape Colony in the 1840's. Basotho and Tsonga migrants worked in the Cape Colony and Delagoa Bay area to Natal respectively. During this time Mozambicans, too, worked as seasonal workers on the farms of the Western Cape. There was a great demand for migrant labour after the discovery of diamonds and by 1874 an estimated 10 000 African mineworkers worked for three to six months in the mines (Trimikliniontis, Gordon & Zondo, 2008: 1325).

Africans were subjected to various forms of exploitation and repression, while white workers enjoyed working in supervisory positions (Davies, 1978: 105). The discovery of diamonds in Kimberly and gold in the Witwatersrand attracted a large number of Bantu-speaking Africans who provided unskilled intensive labour in the mines while the semi and skilled were reserved for the whites (Houghton, 1974: 397).

THE 'BLACK' FARM LABOURER

Unlike Africans in the farms, the mineral treks were far more catastrophic and impacted negatively on the Africans in mines. For instance, in Johannesburg it was just bustle and noise, the African had no cattle or sheep to herd, only the ones to be slaughtered for feeding, no one had consideration for the African ways of life or even the language. All that people did here was work to the clock or the sound of a steam whistle (Marquard, 1955: 191).

The native men had a tendency to move great distances from their tribal homes and this made them available as labourers for mining industries and the farms of the white people. The whole of the agriculture Cape Colony, except that of the extreme south west, depended upon native labour for the shearing of the sheep and for the sowing and reaping of

²²This area now is under the Limpopo Province and Mpumalanga. It used to fall under Transvaal on the Leboa homeland where its inhabitants speak the Pedi language. See the 1978 Bantustan policy.

crops. Thus ‘natives’ were constantly moving about between the Transkeian territories and as a result constituting the ‘labour problem’ of the Cape Colony, for farmers who found themselves depending upon a totally incalculable labour supply. Those in the south west were fortunate in having the Cape Coloured people, while those in the extreme east were more doubtfully fortunate in being very close to the source of labour supply. The farmers of the centre of the Cape Colony, from Oudsthoorn up to Beaufort West were constantly complaining of labour shortage and frequently attributed the smallness of their arable cultivation to the shortage (Marquard, 1955: 191).

For the process of ‘primitive’ capital accumulation, the British colonial state was used as the battering ram which “systematically seized African land and turned the erstwhile peasants into readily exploitable landless proletariat for the benefit of the settler farmers”. Thus, since African labourers were dispossessed of their land, they had no choice but submit to the demands of the British colonial state. This process was rolled out through legislation, such as the Caledon Code of 1809²³. In attempts to regulate the labour supply and to render it more amenable to control, the State’s ‘native’²⁴ policy consisted in the first place, the Master and Servant 1856²⁵ laws which applied to the ‘natives’ in

²³ This legislation press-ganged the nominally free Khoi-Khoi into the service of the settler farmers and Ordinance 49 of 1828 extended the same provision to Africans. Taxation, restrictions of free movement and traders collaborated, often unconsciously, to undermine the economic base of African society (Meli, 1989: xvii).

²⁴ *Native* was synonymously used with terms such as *Bantu*, *African* and *kafir* to refer to dark-skinned tribes of South Africa, see (Kidd, 1907). Although this term, *native* is problematic today as it deals with racial categories, I chose to use it along with the aforementioned similar terms so to contextualise my study.

²⁵ This superseded the Masters & Servants Ordinance of 1841. "Though most of the clauses of the 1841 Ordinance were taken over verbatim by Act 15 of 1856, there are nevertheless important differences ... Whereas the 1841 Ordinance had imposed a penalty of twenty shillings for each month that a child, whether destitute or not, was illegally detained by an employer, the Act of 1856 decreed no penalty at all for the detention of children whose parents or guardians were still living, and altered the penalty for the detention of destitute children to 'not more than twenty shillings nor less than five shillings' " (Marais, 1938: 205).

relation to their agreements that they would enter into with their farmer employers, whereby the native was bound to stay for a certain period. Additionally, the law was in place so that farmers may not settle too many 'natives' with their families (Goodfellow, 1931: 67-68). Another regulation with the same objective as the Master and Servant was the Location Law which aimed at enabling each farmer to settle a certain number of natives on his farm, not only the men but their families too, so as to have a more permanent source of labour on their farms than they could have on wandering 'natives'. In the extreme east of the colony, the Location Law was deemed more important as it addressed the issue of excess in labourers rather than shortage. For instance, the river Kei had the whole of 'native' population on its northern bank although it delimited the land. This was reserved for the 'natives', but later made available for white ownership. That said, there were still a great number of 'native' labourers on the now white land. The whites were outnumbered, at least as far south as the Great Fish River and many other parts of the Eastern Province. Here the white farmers indulged in what was known as 'Kafir Farming'. This practice took many features, one of which was allowing the farmer to have more 'native' labourers than required. The farmer involved in this practice enabled the 'natives' and their whole family to live permanently on his farm and pay him with a portion of their produce or some kind of rent. This practice was, however, met with objection from the farmers further west who contended that, not only was this 'Kafir Farming' bad farming on the part of white farmers, but

It was "designed to enforce discipline on ex-slaves, peasants, pastoralists, and a rural proletariat" (Simons & Simons 1969: 23). "Though it was nominally colour-blind, the penalties were invoked only against the darker workers" (Simons & Simons, 1969: 24).

The offences were grouped into three categories: breach of contract, indiscipline (such as disobedience, drunkenness, brawling and the use of abusive language) and injury to property. Besides fines, penalties also included imprisonments of various time lengths.

Apparently this act was not repealed until 1974, while it was amended at least twice in 1873 and 1926 (Riley, 1991: 138).

it also meant that ‘native’ labour would only be held in the Eastern part while it should be spread across the colony. This was a clear indication of a perpetual form of slavery (Goodfellow, 1931: 69).

The years 1890 to 1914 are considered a period of dramatic mobility of both capital and labour worldwide where “indigenous Southern African mine labour was alternatively either essentially ‘forced,’ appallingly cheap, bore a chilling resemblance to modern slavery or was just short of bondage”. The gold- mining industry in South Africa, under the centralised control of the Chamber of Mines, founded in 1889, saw this as an opportunity for exploitation of ‘blacks’ and speedily established a monopolistic labour supply system of acquiring peasant African Labour (Steward, 2016: 171). It was the Chamber of Mines that first instigated the introduction of the pass laws which stipulated that ‘African’ miners must wear a metal plate or a badge on the arm”²⁶. The Glen Grey Act of 1894 was also employed as a tool to execute the process of African enslavement through the introduction of tax, which in the words of the mine owner, Prime Minister of the Cape Colony and arch-imperialist Cecil Rhodes was to “remove the Natives from the life of sloth and teaching them the dignity of labour and made them contribute to the prosperity of the state and made them give some return for our wise and good government” (Meli, 1989: 3).

Additional to exploitation of Africans was the securing of Chinese labour which took place between 1904 and 1907 (Steward 2016: 171). Sammy Marks had interest in any form of non-European cheap labour. This is demonstrated in a letter he wrote to Lewis dated 16 January 1904 where he highlights the prospects of using Chinese labour on the farms shortly after the government sanctioned it, he wrote as follows:

²⁶ This system would later be amended and Africans were forced to carry documents used as passes for the control of their movements and where they could leave and work (Meli, 1989: 3).

...I am waiting for de la Rey, as I want to find out his feeling as to the importation of Chinese labour. For, although it has been sanctioned by the government here and so forth, the people at home are a little unwilling to give their consent, as they want more assurances from the farmers in the different districts as to how much dearer labour is now on the farms than it was before the war²⁷.

DURING THE UNION

By 1910, the mines had created a low wage system which aimed at subjecting blacks to quasi-servitude as unskilled workers in a harshly hierarchical racial division of labour. Sixty years later, the system still retained these essential characteristics. This apparent stability had tended to mask another dimension which, by contrast, has exhibited considerable fluctuations. The mines could never depend on the reliability of their individual sources of low wage labour. Even traditionally, important suppliers such as southern Mozambique, the Eastern Cape and Lesotho, had experienced sharp fluctuations in recruiting levels up to the 1920s. In some cases, the absolute numbers remained fairly stable over long periods, but the proportional contribution fell owing to growth elsewhere in the system (Yudelman & Jeeves, 1986: 103).

The year 1910 marked the end of colonial administration and the beginning of a Union consisting of the Cape, Orange Free State, Natal and Transvaal which are areas that were previously under British rule. By the end of the nineteenth century, thousands of African people had been dispossessed of their land and cramped together in reserves, areas that were once kingdoms of leaders who had resisted European conquest. Upon the discovery of diamonds in Kimberly and the gold reef in the Witwatersrand, the mining industry relied on black labour who were somewhat forced into mining through administrative laws implemented on the reserves by colonial authorities (Unterhalter, 1987: 4).

²⁷ The letter is contained in the 1904 letter books housed at Jagger Library University of Cape Town

These laws were on the basis that non-Europeans were a necessity for the economic progression of the country, but may not enjoy or claim any political or social rights as the Europeans (Brookes, 1968: 8-9). This period coincided with the slow transformation of settler farming from small to large scale commercial enterprise. Africans could not easily be persuaded to work in the plantations; as a result an alternative labour force was sought. In Natal labourers were brought from India, many of whom would later settle in South Africa, while in the Cape the landless descendants of slaves were used for labour. Because of the opportunist and exploiter that Sammy Marks was, he also had considered the recruitment of Indian labour in Natal in the 1890's to work in his Vaal Colliery Property when the scarcity of the labour force did not improve (Mendelsohn 1991: 49) The territorial segregation policies set out during the colonial rule were sharpened and engrained under the Union through the 1913 Land Act (Unterhalter, 1987: 5).

The issue of an African being ruled and his labour used should not have been as something separate from the social and political life of the country. As a result of industrialisation, a vast number of Africans moved to towns and cities to live, for the most part, in overcrowded and insanitary slums. It destroyed the customary social bonds of tribal life faster than they could be replaced by European standards. In short, industrialisation uprooted the African from the land and created a landless proletariat. The Industrial Revolution in Britain had produced similar results; but in Britain the new working class was able, albeit reluctant to absorb the workers into the economic, political and even the social structure of Britain. In South Africa the proletariat was non-European, and the European ruling class found it difficult to admit the African into the changing economic system and well-nigh impossible to absorb him politically and socially. Industrial expansion depended on economic integration which led to

political and social demands; and the refusal to accede those demands led to economic imbalances (Marquard, 1955: 236-237).

The establishment of the United Party came as a result of a bargain between Hertzog who accepted for the most part on Smuts's views on relations between Boer and Britain and with the Commonwealth; Smuts accepting Hertzog's view on relations between 'black' and white wherein Smuts held that African and European affairs should remain with the Europeans being guardians for African wards. Legislative efforts had been given to this policy by such Acts as the Native Administrative Act 38 of 1927 and the Colour Bar Act of 1911, but Hertzog's aim was to remove 'Africans' from the common electoral roll in the Cape Province and give them separate or communal representation. In 1926 Hertzog attempted to remove the 'African' voters off the electoral roll but failed as he didn't have the two-thirds majority, but succeeded in 1936 because of Smuts' support despite opposition from 'Africans' and European liberals. The natural area for Africans was the reserves, the original tribal homes that were reduced by conquest. Estimates of population growth showed that, when the reserves were fully occupied, there would have been 6 million Africans living in European areas. Accordingly, 'Africans' would later be regarded as migrant labourers and have none of the rights and privileges of citizens. South Africa was developed with non-white labour and more than half of industrial and mining labour came from outside the border (Marquard, 1955:243-244).

For the first time, the contribution of manufacturing to the gross national product outstripped that of mining in 1943. That as it may have been, mine managers were still the principal earners of foreign exchange as they were paid to recruit a raw, new cheap labour force every six months; however, it became a daunting task to execute and in consequence managers of more complex manufacturing plants could not cope with such a high rate of labour turnover. It was during this time that "Paul Kruger advanced Afrikaners into every possible

seat of power by taking advantage of the developing economic structure and finding within it *baantjies vir boeties*, jobs for the boys”. There was an increased demand for supply of permanent ‘black’ workers in the manufacturing industry after Malan took office; however, the hard-core members of the National Party had demanded that black workers be removed from towns. On the one hand white trade unionists, mostly Afrikaners, wanted to deprive their employers of cheap African labour, partly to secure their own jobs and partly to remove the possibility of blacks moving into their neighbourhoods. On the other hand, small to medium holdings farmers , most of whom were Afrikaners, wanted black workers driven from the towns to increase the supply of cheap labour back to the farms to work the land which was forcefully taken from them (Lapping, 1986: 103-104) .

APARTHEID AND THE CHEAP LABOUR SYSTEM

The real purpose of apartheid was stated frankly by white South African statesman, Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd who is usually credited for being the architect of apartheid although he merely formalised an already well established system and proclaimed that: “there is no place for the black man in the white economy other than in certain forms of labour” (Weinberg, 1981: 20). Froneman who was considered to be a less sophisticated member of the party equated Africans to ‘asses and oxen’ who were useful for pulling the white man’s ploughs and carts”. Basically the purpose of apartheid was to ensure a plentiful supply of cheap labour for the white dominated economy through developing a series of laws and institutions which dominated the lives of the blacks from the “cradle of the grave to ensure that the phenomenal rates of profit available to the South African white economy and its overseas partners should be maintained and, if possible perpetuated for all time” (Weinberg, 1981: 20-23).

Migrant labourers were recruited for limited periods and in some instances their third and fourth generation who were all nothing more than just 'units' to be shifted around at the unscrupulous discretion their employers, whose only concern was to get rich quickly (Weinberg, 1981: 28) . Sammy Marks was no different from men, whose objective was to make profit, thus always willing to go an extra mile for cheap and free labour. When Marks was experiencing cheap labour scarcity in the 1890's, he devised other means to fill this gap wherein which the Vaal River property became the best place to start. Here 'black' farm workers were expected to send their sons to work at the colliery for a specific period of time and since the shortage of 'black' labour force didn't progress, other men were removed from 'units' where they were stationed to work underground in the mine. Sammy Marks was determined to get the maximum benefit out of these black migrants to an extent where he was doing the underground inspections himself and in one of the inspections in conversation with the mine manager he said:

I must tell you that I found a good many Kaffirs underground sitting on their behinds. It was dark and I suppose they cannot generally be seen, but if a stranger goes down the mine and puts out his candle, at every turn and corner you will find two or three of these coloured gentlemen so employed. All they require is a prayer book and the missionary and the business will be complete (Mendelsohn 1991: 49).

During the 1948 elections, it was made clear to the voters that for National Party candidates apartheid meant total segregation and as a result all 'blacks' were sent to homelands so as to run a white only economy. This idea was welcomed by white industrialists who had started fearing the growing competition for jobs between themselves and black workers. For some white intellectuals, having blacks as second citizens in town would have been embarrassing, hence they held a view that sending black workers to homelands

translated to them being able to “rule themselves, enjoy full civil rights and be off the white man’s conscience (Brooks, 1968: xiv). In addition to the segregation to be rigidly adhered to among European, Coloured, Native and Asiatic, the government then proposed that there needed to be further separation of Natives as they are large in number. That implied that, the Natives would also be separated according to ethnicity (Dvorin, 1952: 115).

CONVICT LABOUR

Sammy Marks’s wealth grew significantly during the 1870s and 1880s whereby the use of convict labour was concentrated in the two cities regarded as the most emblematic of a new economic and political era. For the US South being Birmingham, Alabama’s industrial capital and for South Africa, Kimberly, the first industrial city. Worger (2004) appositely holds that the two aforementioned countries displayed to a great extent a level of hypocrisy in that they welcomed the abolition of slavery, but also embraced free black labour, in the case of South Africa.

With the growing mining industry, Marks experienced labour turnover which was due to workers only staying for a short period then proceeding elsewhere. This meant that workers would be replaced up to six times a year. Consequently Marks and his partner Lewis approached the government with a request of supplying the Vaal River colliery with captive labour. The request was welcomed by the colonial authorities who indicated that the use of prisoners would save the government a lot of money. However, this request never came to materialise as white labourers refused to work along ‘black’ convicts (Mendelsohn, 1991: 49).

The apartheid government’s revising of the Native Labour Regulations of 1959 were rigid with the intention to govern the employment of ‘Africans’ in urban areas and for the first time these regulations were also applicable to African

women employees. African women who wished to enter urban employment had to register first, otherwise their employment was illegal and chances of their arrest were high. Due to a large number of petty offenders against influx control regulations, the majority of whom were unable to pay fines imposed by the courts; these offenders had to serve prison sentences as it was impossible to find employment for all of them in public works. The authorities at the time sent these prisoners to work on farms, allegedly as a way of separating them from hardened criminals. In 1947 the Native Commissioner in Johannesburg raised concerns about the large numbers of ‘Africans’ who were brought before him for alleged contraventions of the pass laws; consequently, ‘Africans’ were given an option of accepting rural employment to avoid prosecution. An elaborated version of this model occurred widely during 1954 wherein farmers, especially in the Transvaal, were invited to apply for such labour. Different forms of abuses crept into the system as men who accepted work on farms were denied an opportunity of returning home. Even though the scheme was officially abandoned in 1959, farmers could still hire prison labour (Horrell, 1971: 37-38).

One other law that saw many Africans landing in prison was the Natives Act of 1952; commonly known as Pass Laws, which prescribed that every African over the age of sixteen was obliged to carry a pass and must be able to produce it on demand at any time of day or night. These passes were obtained from the Pass Offices where hundreds of people each morning would converge for applications for various documentation and others seeking employment. Those found without passes or faulty documentation would be detained, assembled and loaded into a waiting vehicle which would travel around until it was full then drop them at different police stations. After being locked up, all arrested would appear the next morning before the Bantu Commissioner acting as a magistrate. Once convicted for a pass offence, the prisoner would be sent to work either to a white farmer in a distant rural area or in the garden of a

government official. New Age successfully exposed a racket, whereby pass offenders were “sold” by pass officials in Alexandra, Johannesburg, to waiting farmers, a practice that was supposedly abolished in 1959 (Weinberg , 1981: 29-31).

THE CAGED ‘BLACK’ LABOURER

Being ‘black’ meant you inevitably will endure what Fanon (1963: 15) called colonial violence, which in his view had three dimensions. Firstly, it was institutional insofar as it oversaw the entrenchment of subjugation by force, stemming and dependent on force and its maintenance also depended on force. Secondly it was pragmatic by trapping the daily life of the ‘native’ in nodes, network and detail. This control was physical as it controlled the movement of the Africans in its entirety, like the barbed wire fences surrounding prisons. This violence was also made up of a network of mesh, which, in spatial and topological terms, extended both horizontally and vertically. It was characterised by searches, unlawful assassinations, expulsion and humiliation, racism and contempt targeted at the ‘African’ who had to be monitored down to his every breath. So, to break the ‘African’ even further, the violence was imposed even on language, on everyday life, including speech. Thirdly, the violence was phenomenal. This form of violence intended not only to void the colonial subject of any subject but also to foreclose the future (Mbembe, 2012: 22).

If you did not work in the farms which you have been dispossessed off, you would be forced to migrate to join the mines. Some of the men who were sold through deals made by the South African government and their respective countries ended up in Sammy Mark’s properties to serve. For this human transaction no better piece of writing comes to mind than that of Hugh

Masekela's song, *Stimela*²⁸ (The Coal Train), which explicitly paints the picture of migrant labour in the following fashion:

There is a train that comes from Namibia and Malawi; there is a train that comes from Zambia and Zimbabwe. There is a train that comes from Angola and Mozambique, from Lesotho, from Botswana, from Swaziland, from all the hinterland of Southern and Central Africa. This train carries young and old, African men who are conscripted to come and work on contract. In the golden mineral mines of Johannesburg and its surrounding metropolis, sixteen hours or more a day for almost no pay. Deep, deep, deep down in the belly of the earth. When they are digging and drilling for that shiny mighty evasive stone or when they dish that mish, mesh mush food into their iron plates with the iron shank. Or when they sit in their stinking, filthy, flea-ridden barracks and hostels. They think about the loved ones they may never see again. Because they might have already been forcibly removed from where they last left them or wantonly murdered in the dead of night. By roving, marauding gangs of no particular origin, we are told. They think about their lands, their herds that were taken away from them, with a gun, bomb, teargas and the cannon. And when they hear that Choo-Choo train, a jogging and a popping and a smoking and a pushing and a pumping and a firing and a steaming and a chicking!! and a whaaa whaaa!! They always curse, curse the coal train. The coal train that brought them to Johannesburg.

²⁸ It was on a gloomy 1971 night during a drinking session that Hugh Masekela wrote *Stimela*. All the darkness, homesickness and anger about the evils of apartheid translated into one of the great anthems in South African songbook. It was recorded for the first time for his 1974 album, *I Am Not Afraid* and the later version of the song is the 10-minute opus on a 1994 live recording called *Hope* <https://www.newframe.com/political-songs-hugh-masekelas-stimela>.

CONCLUSION

This chapter attempted to explore the historical background of the control of labour of black people in South Africa. Black migrant labour has its roots in slavery and here I demonstrate that the common principle before and after 1834 is that black and Asian people were moved from one region to another for the purposes of colonial economic progression. To gain full control of black labour and exploit black bodies, both the colonial and apartheid governments put in place rigid legislation. Marks did not miss out on this exploitation and that is reflected in especially his mines. While the men who worked in the mines and farms may have buried and most likely are still burying their heads in shame, every day drowning in feelings of failure because they brought little from *makgoweng*, these men are heroes still. The entrapping system of colonisation and apartheid put them in the position they found themselves in and unlike others who succeeded in untangling themselves from the chains of slavery, the bodies of these migrant labourers remained along with their minds bonded in the unjust system but they still survived to tell the tales. So, this chapter not only highlights the history of migrant labour but also pay homage to the men who held on under difficult circumstances and who some of their descendants have inherited servitude and others emancipated from it. I wish to consider myself fortunate in that I escaped the inheritance of servitude. However I find myself haunted by the unpleasant conditions that my uncles must have endured while working for the whites, it haunts even more as I witnessed and I carry with the effects of migrant labour.

CHAPTER THREE

EXCAVATING 'BLACK BODIES': AN INTERROGATION OF THE SAMMY MARKS PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

*The images cry and we respond to the call with new evidence...If the
photographic image survives history, it carries history* (Kadar; Perreault & Warley:
2009: 5).

INTRODUCTION

My journey to probing the lives of black people at Zwartkoppies Farm commenced in February 2018 with a tour of the Sammy Marks house now a museum, and towards the end of the tour I was shown a small room which is now being used as an archive. It was only after two days that I went into this room, and in here I came across dozens of photographs belonging to the Marks family. As I looked around the room, there hung a big photograph of black men working in the fields with a number of what looked like canvas mealie bags on the ground. I continued browsing through the boxes to see what was contained and found some of these boxes with files written “swart werkers”²⁹. These “swart werkers” files consisted of photographs of black workers, mainly men. Images of these workers were captured at different establishments and a number of them captioned “Vereeniging mine”. Time spent in this space became overwhelming and this moment encapsulated the assertion by Oliver (1989: 8-9) in that, photography has a special power to transport the viewer to the scene or incident portrayed and it can register mood or an atmosphere. “These hidden images speak of a past that never was; they represent at once something that was profoundly lived but also of lives denied” (O’Connell, 2012: 42). In this moment, I felt compelled to exhume these lives that are buried in boxes. Here I knew I had a responsibility towards a future generation, a responsibility that Fanon declares, thus “I cannot disassociate myself from the future that is proposed for my brother. Every one of my acts commits me as a man. Every one of my silences, every one of my cowardice, reveals me as a man” (Fanon, 1967: 89)

In this chapter I will investigate not only photographs of black servants who worked at the Zwartkoppies farm but also those who were stationed at other establishments such as coal mines in Vereeniging, Orange Free State whose

²⁹ Afrikaans phrase to mean black workers in English.

images are in this archive. I will attempt to bring to life the frozen multiple configurations that are embedded in these historical photographs by employing archival records as supplementary evidence, and consequently expanding on the issue of migrant labour from chapter two.

It will be a disservice not to highlight the crucial periods that crafted Africa and specifically South Africa to what it is today. In his *Critique of a Black Reason* Achille Mbembe clearly articulates the three fundamental points from which black people especially South African can escape from in the discourse of history. Be it in politics, literature, the arts or philosophy, black discourse remain trapped in slavery, colonization and apartheid (2017: 78). Since this research is situated in labour studies, it was only apt that as a premise to investigating the Sammy Marks photographic archive I begin with slavery which was motivated in the main by imperial and colonial quests for economic progression that relied on labour.

SLAVERY AND COLONISATION

The spectacle of slavery is characterised by chains, slave ships and broken families and has touched on every century of the modern era, including our own. The study of African slavery in the modern world focuses chiefly on economic history; however slavery extended beyond the economy, consequently altering human emotions and troubling the human spirit. Indeed slavery was a tragedy for the African people for they were a sacrifice for the economic progression of the wider world. Not only is African slavery of magnitude for its moral and philosophical meaning but for its importance in modern economic history. Slavery left Africans depleted in population, divided, stunted economically and relegated to being an inferior race of the world due to their enslavement. People in the New World believed in the association of slavery with dark skin colour and these beliefs eventually became doctrines which were put forward and supported by ample quotation from the

Bible. “Other racial stereotypes and ‘anti-black’ racism developed or increased in intensity after ‘black’ and slave became synonymous. Africans were believed to be the descendants of Ham, thus condemned to be the ‘lowest of the slaves’ compared to their fellow human beings” (Kamies, 2018: 21).

While males are featured prominently in the surviving slavery records, it is immaterial as to who suffered the most or which gender was the majority in the enslavement of Africans, fact is there was inordinate suffering (Manning, 1990: 1-3).

In his autobiography *Up from Slavery*, Booker Washington (1995: 1) paints a picture of how slavery stripped black people in America and elsewhere of their roots and he does so by stating that all he knows is that he was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin Country, Virginia. However, he is not sure of the date of his birth. Washington writes: “I am not quite sure of the exact place or exact date, but at any rate I suspect I must have been born somewhere at some time”. Washington’s loss of roots resonates with my quest to investigating histories of these black “servants”.

Soon after the settlers took over land for their own cultivation so to sell supplies to passing ships, they needed labour. As a result of being prohibited by the Netherlands East India Company (VOC) to use Khoikhoi labour the new commercial farmers began to import slaves from West Africa and Asia to work for them. Many of the slaves that were brought to the Cape were political prisoners or convicts. Apart from West Africa, other slaves came from Madagascar and Angola (Callinicos, 1987: 23)

Imperialisms existed in the political form just as much as it did with the economy. One of the harshest forms of exploitation was what the Germans call *Raubwirtschaft*, entailing the direct appropriation of goods or the destruction of irreplaceable wealth. In order to make profits, the Europeans waged wars on

predatory African societies such as the Zulu by raiding their neighbours for captives. Backward agricultural export economies depended on slaves but slave-catching, slave-trading and slavery had long since become objectionable to the great European by the time of the scramble for Africa. The European colonial economies gradually came to depend on free wage-labour. European entrepreneurs regarded slavery both as an affront to human dignity and as a challenge to their own economic system. The British, French, Belgians and Germans all combined to stamp-out slave-trading within their respective dominions, doing away thereby with what a senior British police officer called the” iniquities abduction of valuable labour” (Colson, 1969: 18-19).

DEMAND FOR AFRICAN SLAVES AND LABOUR

The white man took up the burden of ruling his dark-skinned fellows throughout the world, and in South Africa he has carried that burden alone, feeling well assured of his fitness for the task. He has seen before him a feeble folk, strong only in their numbers and fit only for service, a people unworthy of sharing with his own race the privileges of social and political life, and it seemed right therefore in his sight that these people should bend under his dominant will (Nielsen, 1922: 1).

Slavery includes aspects of demography, institutional factors and such economic factors as labour cost and the demand for slave produce. In America, slaves worked primarily on sugar plantations and in mines, though they also provided a great deal of domestic service. In the Mediterranean a particular intensity of labour in sugar production always seemed to point to slavery. For mines as well, a coerced labour force presented great advantages for the owners. Africans mined gold in Brazil and various minerals in lowland Spanish territories. Slaves did more than just cutting cane and mining gold; there was always a range of tasks to be performed in agriculture, domestics and artisanal

work. These tasks that were performed are some of the reasons that resulted in the stability of the sex and age composition of slaves purchased by Europeans from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century (Manning, 1990: 31).

Slavery in South Africa was justified and endorsed through sentiments highlighted by Niesel (1922: 1) that slavery and colonisation native saved the native from staying in an uncivilised society. The white employers have supplied strong inducements to industry. And this demand for labour has not only given the ‘natives’ the opportunity of satisfying new needs which the spread of Christianity and education has evoked, it has itself been a most effectual educational agency. It has brought the natives into touch with the white communities. If it has exposed them to the vices of civilisation, it also has greatly stimulated among them a “new and healthy spirit of progress”. Partly from racial feeling, partly from force of circumstances, the white in South Africa relied almost exclusively on the natives for unskilled labour. The whites in South Africa rely on the migrant Native for practically all purposes involving manual labour. The system had its disadvantages as Natives continuously left their employment just when they were becoming efficient. A good harvest often makes them reluctant to seek work and the cost and difficulty of organising this fluctuating supply of labour were a constant anxiety to white South African.

It is of great significance to premise the history of labour in slavery as it serves as foreground. I’m in accord with Kamies (2018: 19), a writer and heritage and historical scholar in that the “vague knowledge of slavery, reinforced by the absence of published slave narratives, has led to a general disregard for its importance among, especially, the descendants of the enslaved”.



Figure 1

THE VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

With blurry faces, nameless, “but with gritty, all grimy from years of arduous toil they are” (Kadar; Perreault & Warley, 2009: 5). Apparent courage oozes through their still bodies, oppressed but resilient. It is a cold image, silent and frozen in time. The image (figure 1) is untitled and without a photographic company name or photographer’s signature at the back or front as is with other photographs from this archive. Populous with men holding what looks like working tools typically positioned alike to how people working in the fields hold hoes. Apparently a woman in the front holding two children in each of her hands while another child adjacent sits in between two men. “Some images are lost or forgotten, and when they surface a shift in understanding may occur”. One of the greatest gifts of any text is ambiguity, for it provides a multiplicity of possible meanings towards the continuation of all interpretive work. Context, intention and object are all zones of exploration and analysis in photography (Kadar, Perreault & Warley, 2009: 3). At first gaze of this photograph (figure

1), I noticed the three children who stood out for me, in my mind I wondered, were they being groomed to be “future servants”? Groomed to walk in the footsteps of their parents or guardians? What choice did they have in that fate anyway? Could this be another case of child labour similar to what Suzan Levine (2013) describes in her book *Children of a bitter Harvest: Child Labour in the Cape Winelands*? What is for certain is that the image above (figure 1) was taken between 1880 and 1886 because a similar photograph³⁰ displaying same location has an inscription ‘1892 Old Zwartkopje’ to suggest that the house had already been erected. A row of blue gum trees also confirms that this location is next to the old homestead. In photographs lies layers of histories, truths, constructions and reconstruction, it can only be through a process of inquisitiveness and interrogation that their meaning come to the surface.



Figure 2

Kadar, Perreault & Warley (2009: 1) writes that photographs themselves inspire revision as context change. They are often viewed as representations of

³⁰ This photo SM 4301 is part of the Sammy Marks Photographic Collection housed at the now Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum.

historical events and monuments that need not only be looked at in order to be understood. The photograph above (figure 2) also has no caption however; the supposition is that it was taken in one of Mark's mines due to it [image] only portraying men. So, this could have been at the mine in Vereeniging or even the Robert Victor mine³¹. In this photograph I see men with fewer options making sacrifices so to take care of their families. But them being here also represents broken families because of the extended periods of time they are likely going to spent away from their homes. The context of this photograph would have had a different meaning to what it is today. Photography can transform a subject into an object (Barthes, 1981: 13). It has the power to evoke intense and complicated feelings largely because of meditations our daily life, work life and domestic life. A new lens applied to a new photograph creates a visual public memory for contemporary viewers. The reclamation of old photographs expands the range of possible interpretations and in tandem deepens their transformative power. The confrontation between memory and history plays itself out at the level of the reclaimed image and in the case where there is no one to account for memory, archives assume its place (Kadar, Perreault & Warley 2009: 5). For the Sammy Marks photographic archive, I am relying on Sammy Marks' letter books as supporting evidence as the photographs of black 'servants' do not offer much in terms of the names or where they could have come from. Albeit these men may be without names, their social and cultural lives may be deduced from the photographs. This confrontation between history and memory may be interpreted variously, but in this collection, photographs are often seen to be embedded in shifting historical contexts, intentional or hermeneutic distortions and ambiguous multiple, sometimes competing meanings. To interrogate old photographs is to ask if these photographs had fulfilled a social, cultural or a political need and we use it as if it stood still, or we force it into a narrative

³¹ This is part of the 1904 letter books housed at Jagger Library, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

because it coexists with other photos in a series, or because its context has been adapted or transformed by social and cultural forces (Kadar, Perreault & Warley 2009: 6).

THE EXHUMATION OF ‘BLACK SERVANTS’ THROUGH ARCHIVES

Archives capture history through the perspective and purpose of those who have been privileged to write and record it. Archives tend to present a dominant narrative that narrows our understanding of the full experience (Sealy & Dafour : 2017). It is for that reason that I have employed archival records too so to uncover histories that could not be deduced from the photographs alone.

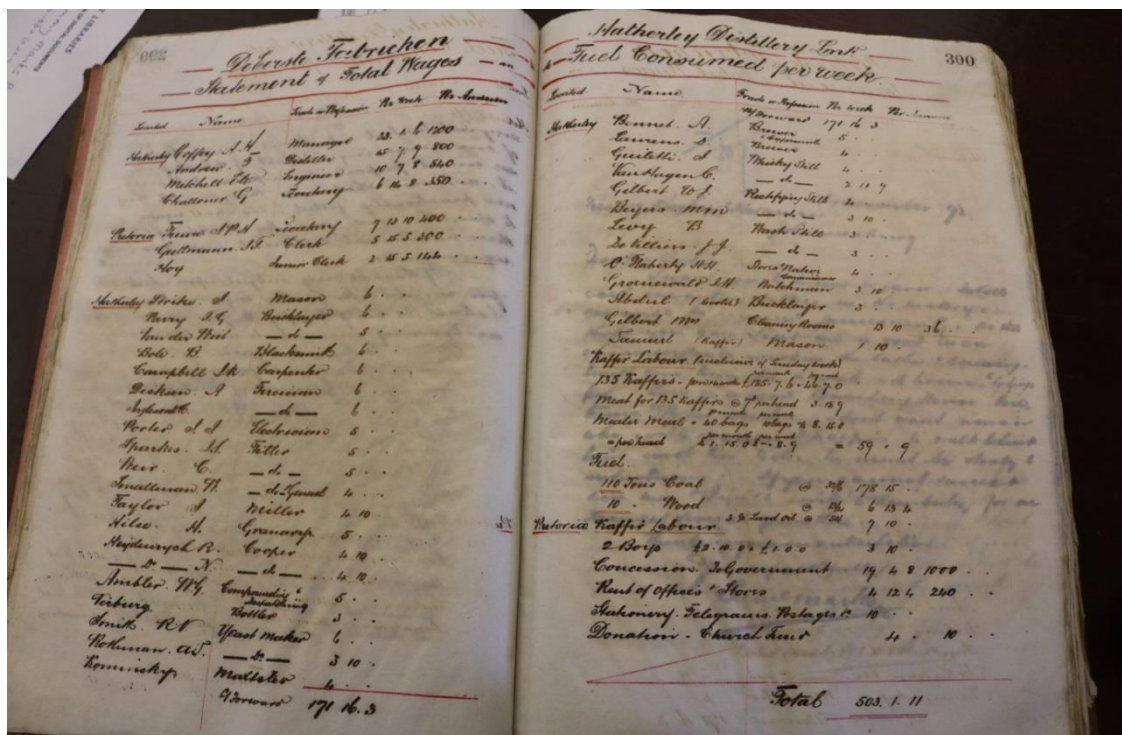


Figure 3

Apart from Mendelsohn’s *Uncrowned King of the Transvaal* (1991), the history pertaining to Sammy Marks discards black people to having played a role in Sammy Marks life, especially in that black people were ‘servants’ in his Zwartkoppies Farm. While there is photographic evidence that there were black ‘servants’ in the house and those working outside, the narrative in the tours at

the now Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum omits the existence of black ‘servants’. The image³² above (figure 3) is a record entitled “DeEerste Fabrieken Hatherley Distillery³³, Statement of Total Wages and Fuel Consumed per Week”. This record has three fields for “name”, trade or profession and total per week. All the European names start with a surname, initials and occupation. Right at the bottom is “Samuel (kaffir)”. This form of identification is the same as how slaves were identified. There is a great chance that “Samuel” is not even this black man’s name but was given this name when he started working for the distillery. Below Samuel (kaffir) is “Kaffir labour” and following is 135 kaffirs, suggesting that these are black people. The 135 are clubbed as one as though they are things and this is clearly done without consideration of who they are. What is reflected in these records is the degrading and relegating of black bodies to the bottom of every ledger that came about as a result of colonial racism which ensured that natives in South Africa were excluded from benefiting economically. Furthermore, politically and spatially black people were disadvantaged by the whites so as to eliminate economic competition (Fanon, 1967: 87-88). “In the absence of a recorded history, it is to the humble images which I turn my gaze in an attempt to make sense of questions of race, colour and identity. In so doing... arrive at a deeper understanding of what it meant to live through a colonised and apartheid period from the viewpoint of the oppressed” (Kamies, 2018:11).

Ethnographic studies have shown that photographs can “perform the role of uncovering the social relations of the dead, those of transnational migrants”. Furthermore, contemporary writings in the anthropology of photography have also explored the ways in which photographs may also be objects of, and the

³² Statement of total wages and fuel consumed at DeEerste Fabrieken Hatherley Distillery from the letter book dated 1907.28.1-1907.7.6 housed at Jagger Library at the University of Cape Town.

³³ Shortly following his arrival in Pretoria, Sammy Marks established a distillery at Hatherley farm and stayed in a hotel while the factory was being built, then later moved into the factory’s bachelors’ quarters (Mendelsohn, 1991: 33).

subjects of relationships in their own right (Vokes, 2010: 377). According to Scherer (1992: 32), photographs as a body of evidence are open to analysis and interpretation and should be viewed via the interrelationship of the photographer, subject and viewer.

Despite the shortcomings and advantages pertaining to archives, one of the roles of archives is safe keeping, however many times it is at the detriment of the oppressed for the oppressed are not involved in the writing of these archival records. For many years of studies into Sammy Marks and his legacy there has been an overlook of black workers and that resulted in them sinking even deeper into a muted history. While it cannot be repudiated that archives play a significant role in the preservation of history, we should also not be oblivious to the reality that archives have equally so been the concealer of some histories.

READING AND LISTENING TO THE PHOTOGRAPH

A different archive is inherent in photographs, hence it is important that it be read from below, from the point of those who are silenced, displaced, deformed and made invisible by the machineries of profit and progress (Sekula, 2003: 444). In their absentia or when dead, a portrait of a person stands in for them and a landscape reminds the photographer that they once visited that place. Photography adds to the memory of things that the naked human eye cannot see at first glance (Bate, 2009:9).

Photography recognises the multiplicity of social sites and social practices, thus creating discourses. A photographic discourse is one that asks why pictures were taken, what they were used for, how they were made to signify, for whom and where (Bate, 2009: 9).

Therefore, photography has no identity. Photographs should not be viewed merely as the transparent evidence of history but rather as historical objects

offering a kind of power about which we should ask questions concerning the conditions of their production of meaning (Bate, 2009:9).

I concur with Emeritus Anthropologist Scherer (1992: 36), and Oliver (1989) in that, photographs can be used as artefacts themselves and as primary source of visual evidence with authenticity and authority and not just illustrations for textual information.



Figure 4

The image (figure 4) above depicts a large group of black males in what looks like an industrial site. When looking closely though, it is apparent that this group constitutes of males of different age groups. The caption, “Group of Native Labourers Vereeniging B&T. Coy” offers substantive evidence regarding the site in which this photograph was taken. Especially historical photographs, they require to be examined closely so to draw the maximus

possible amount of information. One needs to scan every detail in the photograph for clues to amplify deductions and conclusions already made provisionally (Oliver, 1989: 8-9).

I therefore can conclude that this image was taken at the Vereeniging Coal Mine which Sammy Marks owned and indeed had black workers. This assertion is accentuated by archival evidence that Sammy Marks arrived in Pretoria in 1891 just days after the Pretoria Convention was signed between the British and the Boers to discuss the Vaal River Coal Mine and for this colliery Marks relied on black labour from Mozambique in the 1890s. Due to the extent of coal found at this farm, the Association experienced high demand of labour. At the commencement of operation the company had eight white and eighteen black workers to one hundred and twenty by May 1882 (Mendelsohn, 1991: 167).

VISUAL BIOGRAPHIES



Figure 5

Although it cannot for certain be concluded pertaining to the precise context of the image (figure 5) above, archival records shows that Sammy Marks was fully

involved in the process of the then government recruiting African labourers from parts of Africa, thus, this group of male could have come from any part of Africa where recruitments were taking place during this period. In a “Strictly and Confidential” letter dated 29 April 1907 with a subject title “Native Labour and Labour for the Mines” addressed to Lewis, Marks updates Lewis on the meeting held with the then Prime Minister Jan Smuts, wherein he emphasises that it was crucial that the Chamber of Mines influenced the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association in support of the government to ensure a smooth recruitment process.

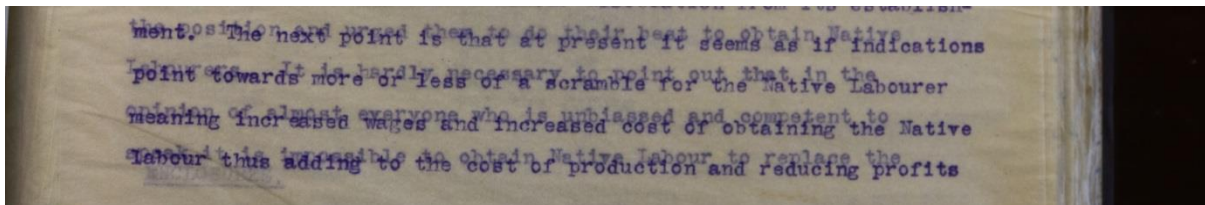


Figure 6

At page 4 of the same letter, Sammy Marks apprises Lewis on the government’s plans to repatriate Chinese labourers to which he is not pleased with. It is not surprising that Sammy Marks would be in opposition of this proposal to repatriate Chinese labourers for he had an interest in their importation in 1904 even after government sanctioned it³⁴. Amongst this group are two young boys sitting in the front row which could suggest child labour. Practices of child labour would not come as a surprise as Sammy Marks made it an obligation for black workers to send their sons to work at the Vaal River property in the 1890’s while experiencing cheap labour scarcity (Mendelsohn 1991: 49).

³⁴ This is part of the 1904 letter books housed at Jagger Library University of Cape Town



Figure 7

Like any other object, entrenched in photographs are cultural biographies concerned with their life history and their social interactions and exchanges with people. This is to say that, “as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other” (Gosden and Marshall, 1999: 169-170). Before the discovery and interaction with the Sammy Marks photographic archive I had no informed knowledge of the extent to which black people were part of the Sammy Marks’ building of his empire, it was only after contact that I learnt of black people’s role in Marks’ life. As (Feldman, 2009: 41) notes, re-contextualization of objects emerge as they move into new circumstances. In this instance this “new circumstance” is of a democratic South Africa, wherein as a person of a previously oppressed race am empowered to re-imagine “modes of survival by those who were dominated and

how they constructed a world for themselves in which they were human” (O’Connell: 2012: 104).

The image (figure 7) above depicts a mixture of genders and races but all these people have one thing in common, they are servants. Although my focus is on black servants, I found this particular image interesting as it further emphasises the role of Sammy Marks in the importation of labour. Being relatively unchanging through time and space, physical objects derive their significance in large part from the persons and events to which they are connected. Kopytoff (1986) argues that, for things to be understood in their totality, it is important to consider their existence, processes, cycles, exchanges and consumption as objects are capable of acquiring new histories through their process of exchange and as a result creating mutual value between people and things (Gosden and Marshal, 199 : 170). This is to say that any activity that contain knowledge of an object’s past and present through audiences of that specific time and can be associated with that item's social or cultural makeup therefore constitutes its biography. Yet this is hardly a unidirectional relationship: the specific physical form and detail that constitute an object catalyse diverse human responses. As people and things interact with one another and accumulate intertwined histories, they transform one another, thus endowing the physical items with an aura of potency (Feldman, 2009: 41). Appadurai (2006: 16) holds that despite attempts to maintain objects to a fixed form and context, it is impossible to keep objects to any sort of permanence as every activity that an object encounter, be it restoration or conservation, any form of contact with a new audience transforms its biography.

PHOTOGRAPHY: AN ARCHIVE AND NARRATIVITY

According to Sekula (2003: 450) photography is neither art nor science but rather, it lingers between the discourse of both art and science and owing “its

claims to cultural value on both the model of truth upheld by empirical science and the model of pleasure by expressive romantic aesthetic”. Photography provides a place where all kinds of sociological and moral and historical questions can be raised because of its ability to turn every experience, every event, and every reality into a commodity, object or an image (Sontag, 2003: 60). A different archive is inherent in photographs, hence it is important that it be read from below, from the point of those who are silenced, displaced, deformed and made invisible by the machineries of profit and progress. Photography has different archives, from historical, museum, government to family archives and a common characteristic of all archives is that the authorship, control and ownership do not necessarily lie with the same individual. Therefore, “these pictures are literally for sale and their meanings are up for grabs” (Sekula, 2003: 444& 451).

Images are maps which help us navigate through diverse journeys seeking to recover strands of conflicting worldviews that were a part of a black history. Therefore, remembering evokes an assemblage of fragments becoming a whole. Photographs provide a necessary narrative, a way through which to enter history without words and when words enter the image come alive to offer a significant form of documentation for the sustainable and affirmation of oral memory (Hooks, 2003: 393).

REPRESENTATION AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs are often viewed as representations of historical events therefore need not be looked at in order to be understood as in them are embedded social and historical lives that are not apparent on first look, they have lives that may have been distorted by the passing of time and or as a result of political agendas thus these changes consequently cause shifts in meanings. These photographs are fixed in time and place, yet mobile, continuously accumulating meanings.

Even if images get lost or are forgotten when they resurface a new viewpoint occurs. A new lens of viewing old photographs creates a visual public memory to contemporary viewers, through the expansion and presentation of possible interpretations “deepens their transformative power and often plays out confrontation between memory and history” (Kadar, M. Perreault, J. Warley, L, 2009: 1-5)

Photographs themselves cannot explain anything but rather are infinite invitations to deduction, speculation and fantasy, until interrogated; they remain frozen in time and space. They offer us an opportunity to feel, intuit and question what is beyond the surface. If we accept photographs as the camera records, it will imply we accept the world as it is. The very muteness of what is, hypothetically, comprehensible in photographs is what constitutes their attraction and provocativeness. The omnipresence of photographs has an incalculable effect on our ethical sensibility (Sontag, 1973: 4-24).

The focal point of narrativity is the representation of time which in part the meaning is constructed by its implicit ordering of events (Alvorado, 2001: 141; 151). Barthes (1981: 1) holds that an object that may consist of “three practices of three emotions or of three intentions”. Here the practices are made up of firstly, the operator who is the photographer, secondly, ourselves who are spectators in one form or another through our books, archives and collections and lastly is the target and that could be an object or a person who is the spectrum. The very opposing and unison gazes in a photograph represent a multiplicity of narratives to be deduced.

Photograph separates attention from perception, and yields up only the former, even if it is impossible without the latter; this is that aberrant thing...an action of thought without thought an aim

without target. The photograph then becomes a bizarre medium, a new form of hallucination: false on the level of perception, true on the level of time: a temporal hallucination...a modest, shared hallucination. On the one hand it is not there and on the other it has indeed been (Barthes, 1981: 111-115).

Photographs can also be used as anthropological documents and not as replications of reality itself but rather as representations that require critical reading and interpretation. “Neither the photograph itself as an artefact, nor the viewer’s interpretation of neither the subject of the photograph, nor an understanding of the photographer’s intention can alone give holistic meaning to images (Scherer, 1992: 32).

CONCLUSION

The process of discovering the Sammy Marks archives and going through the photographs and questioning them feels like a re-representation of the voices that were silenced and invisible. Like creating a tapestry, the interrogation of this archive felt like a process of weaving by carefully pulling every strand to extract any possible history and meaning. Photographs in this study are used as a tool to dismantle their stationary form so to enable them to speak for those who were denied the opportunity to tell their own stories, the oppressed. I echo what O’Connell (2012: 16-17) and Rose (2003: 11) contend, in that “photographs are never simple representations; on the contrary they convey sets of meanings that are embedded in very palpable social, political and economic frames. By un-trapping and exhuming the archive we disrupt comfort created by those in power by empowering the disempowered, even in their absence. Attempting to unearth histories of these black “servants” has been a daunting task, however this chapter premise for chapter 4 in which I deal with descendants of other ‘servants’ thus, giving a louder voice of the dead.

Photography has been and is, central to the aspect of decolonisation that calls us back to the past and offers a way to reclaim and renew life affirming bonds. Using these images, we connect ourselves to a recuperative, redemptive memory that enables us to construct radical identities, images of ourselves that transcends the limits of the colonization eye (Hooks, 2003: 394).

As a descendant of the oppressed grappling with issues of what being free really means, “I find myself with tense muscles, not from terror but rather of the exchange of quarry to hunter” (Fanon:1965). I dream of being a hunter that can be free to roam. For as long as the oppression endured by my ancestors still linger around, my freedom is yet to be attained.

CHAPTER 4

SERVANTS HISTORIES THROUGH ARCHIVAL IMPRINTS AND NARRATIVES

We live in other people's pasts whether we know it or not and whether or not we want to do so (Tonkin, 1992: 9).

INTRODUCTION

It was about a week after starting work at the now DITSONG: Sammy Marks Museum. A white former employee had come to visit the museum and one of the current employees went to serve the former employee tea around 11:00 in the morning, at 13:00 then later around 15:00. I was not so much disturbed by the serving of tea by this employee which I found out later was not part of their job description, but it was the way it was presented and the dress code. I was reminded of the stories my father narrated of his mother my grandmother who worked as a domestic worker. This employee's attire included an apron and a head wrap that is usually worn by domestic workers. This event was uncomfortable for me to observe and subsequently I had a conversation with the employee to highlight to them that tea-making was not part of their job, and a discussion followed pertaining to their attire which was not in uniformity with other employees that occupied same designation. An akin scenario to what I witnessed, is aptly described by Professor Njabulo Ndebele (1999) in his *Game Lodges and Leisure colonialists* whereby he alludes that 'the black workers, behaved rather meekly, cleaning the rooms, washing the dishes...and making sure that in the morning the leisure refugees find their cars clean'. This black worker came across as a domestic servant before an employee of a national museum in a democratic South Africa. At one point museums, like game lodges, were an extension of colonial and apartheid power. Currently it is a place where those who have lost power, go to regain a sense of possession. This Sammy Marks Museum is still intact as it was during the colonial and apartheid eras, thus ripe for oppressive inclinations to perpetuate.

The same week I commenced with my duties as acting manager, I made time to meet with all staff members one on one and walked through the site. During these meetings, the one thing mentioned consistently, was staff members complaining about their safety when coming to work and leaving the site to go

home. I asked one member of staff to take me through the footpath that they use and they suggested that I use a van due to safety and distance. However, I declined the offer, since I wanted to experience what they were talking about. I was accompanied by another member of staff. As we were walking, we came across a house which looked like it had no occupants; it was as though it had been vacant for a while. I asked whom the house belonged to and I was told that it was the Manyaka family house. Upon inquiring about the Manyaka family, I was told that most of the family members had died, but the remaining one does come to stay at the house from time to time. After a while I was able to trace that family member.

On the periphery of the main house of the Marks family utilised as the central point of the museum now, there are two houses which look almost misplaced as they differ from all the buildings on the site in design, material and colour of paint. These houses belong to the Kwenda family. In my initial probe I was told that their parents used to work for the Marks family, and they have been living on the farm ever since. Currently some family members from the second and third generations work at Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum and other sites within the DITSONG Museums of South Africa. Thence I began to trace the servants of the Marks family and their descendants.

This chapter examines and traces the histories of ‘servants’ through archival records and oral histories. Here I deal with the issue of child labour and forced removals in Zwartkoppies and discuss how the colonial and apartheid laws were enablers of the violations of “black” people’s human rights. I do so within the context of oral histories provided through interviews. This chapter intends to bring to the fore the unrecorded histories of servants through their voices and those of their descendants which will fill the gaps in the archives.

FARM WORK IN SOUTH AFRICA

Due to the remoteness of farms, farm workers occupy an invisible class in the society. A continuing powerlessness in their job situation frequently matches their lack of public profile. As a result of the unskilled and semi-skilled nature of farm work, farm workers tend to feel powerless, especially with regard to job security. The social and economic problems farm workers find themselves in can be traced to colonisation, and apartheid which were characterised by segregation (Atkinson, 2007: 3-4). The labour movement has seen transformation in South Africa's factories since the mid-1970s and township-based mass mobilisation movements challenging the domination of the Nationalist government. As this transformation occurred, farm workers remained silent figures on the margins of South African politics. “Farmer and farm worker are all too often not merely symbols but stereotypes, a static frieze that embodies the racist attitudes of the past, but which has no clear connection to the politics of the present” (du Toit, 1994: 375). Agriculture in South Africa and other similar societies set the tone for intensified racism. The capitalist farmers are enabled by political powers to gain control of the land and acquire as much cheap labour as possible (Atkinson, 2007: 19). The demand for labour supply deepened due to a rise in production on white farms and the lucrative wages offered on the mines. White farmers became frustrated with their inability to attract adequate labour supply; subsequently they subjected black people moving through their farms to harassment. A shilling pass was imposed in 1874 on all black people passing through or leaving the Free State. In turn, the shilling pass regulation elicited protest from the Sotho people (Atkinson, 2007: 29).

Since its origins in ‘master-slave’ relations at the Cape of Good Hope in the seventeenth century (Waldman, 1996; Williams, 2016), the relationship between commercial farmers and farm workers in South Africa has been

complex and multi-layered, characterised by power relations that left workers vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Until relatively recently, this relationship was virtually unregulated. Because of the geographical dispersion and isolation of commercial farms, farmers and farm workers lived and worked side by side although with very different qualities of life. This set up created a context for violations of human rights that went unseen, unreported and unpunished (Devereux, 2019: 1).

From the 1860s apprentices as a source of labour supply dried up and that resulted in the Boers relying on tenant labour, particularly after the Sotho wars³⁵. Refugees from further afield settled for varying periods on white farms. These tenants consequently became share croppers, labour tenants or squatters:

The apprenticeship system was a form of slavery designed to tie black workers to the Boer household by capturing them young and bringing them up as de-cultured dependants. This practice had characteristics of both slavery and proletarian labour system. The system was regulated in the Orange Free State by means of an ordinance passed in 1856 which provided for release of males at the age of 21 and females at 18. However, in reality, once apprenticed, the apprentices were tied to the colonial economy for life. When they reached maturity and married, they were granted a degree of independence and might have been loaned stock to their owners. Thus, the farmer was not burdened by the expense of maintaining wage labourers, but labour was available on call (Atkinson, 2017: 29).

³⁵ Basotho Wars consisted of three wars between Basotho and white settlers from 1858-1868 in what is now the Free State and Lesotho area. The purpose of these three wars was the maintenance of territorial rights in the area between the Caledon and Orange Rivers; from present day Wepener to Zastron, and the area north of the Caledon River, which includes present day Harrismith and the area further westwards.

‘Black’ people would be offered a small piece of land to build a house in exchange for their work on the farm. The Molefi family, like many other ‘black’ people, found themselves in white-owned lands unwillingly as a result of Sammy Marks and his family encroaching on their settlements (Sana Maselatole Mabogoane³⁶).

“When Sammy Marks and his family arrived on what is called Zwartkoppies farm now, they found my great-great-grandfather. The place was at that point called Gamorabane. I’m not sure if the name Gamorabane was my great-great-grand father’s name. However, what I’m sure of is that he was the father of my great grandfather, Kutumela Molefi after which Kutumela Molefi Primary School on Zwartkoppies farm is named. Although it is not clear as to when Kutumela Molefi was born, his headstone indicates that he died on 23.04.1943. My grandfather Motshegoa Frans Molefi was born in 1912. He was Kutumela Molefi’s son. When we were growing up, my grandfather was the only one still alive, all his siblings had died. There were other extended families here. Many members of them left, my aunts and uncles” (Sana Maselatole Mabogoane).

CHILD LABOUR ON ZWARTKOPPIES FARM

Labour can be defined as a commodity that can be bought and sold on the capitalist market. This sale can be in a form of employment between two parties, that being employer and employee. From this definition of labour, we can assume that there should be some form of equality between employer and employee. However, when labour is demanded from one party through force,

³⁶ Sana Mabogoane is the granddaughter of Frans Molefi (recorded as Frans Molefe), the daughter of Elizabeth Moipone Mabogoane. The record pertaining to Frans Molefe is contained in a letter written by JNS Meisels to Van Kleef on 21st September 1976.

extortion, underpayment or non-payment, this form of agreement dispossesses one part and benefits another (Vambe, 2013: 16).

I went to school at Kutumela Primary School. I was forced to drop out of school to work on the farm. I had to work because we were afraid that they would evict my family from the farm (Moses Popotane Manyaka).

Child labour as defined by Fyfe (1989) is work that has a negative bearing on a child's wellbeing. This kind of work also limits the development of a child, negatively impacts on the health and also interferes with their schooling. Other forms of worst child labour practices include as entrenched in the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 No. 182 include, child trafficking and prostitution. Furthermore, Article 2(1) of the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 No. 29 defines forced or compulsory labour as 'all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the said person has not offered himself voluntarily' (Vambe, 2013: 16).

The Education and Training Act of 1979 prohibited anyone from withdrawing a child from school; however, this provision did not apply to children working on the farms. As such, this act perpetuated child labour which was a vital part of farm economy. It was estimated in 1990 that about 60 000 children between the ages of 6 and 14 worked on South African farms. It was permissible that children over the age of 14 can enter into an employment contract with their farm employees provided their parents or guardians had endorsed the process. It was almost impossible for the children not be employed as refusal to enter into these contracts so as to increase the farm owner's labour may have resulted in the entire family being evicted from the farm (Atkinson, 2007: 38, De Kiewet, 1937: 12).

In Zwartkoppies my grandfather worked for Joe Marks as a gardener for many years. He aged and was no longer able to work. Four years went by without him working and Joe Marks told my grandfather that he cannot continue to live on the farm while he is not working on the farm. Since his children had left the farm and were working elsewhere, my grandfather could continue living on the farm on condition that one of his family members worked on the farm. Following Marks's conditions of stay, my grandfather and his second wife Mmathokwana Caroline came to Dennilton to ask my parents that I come to Zwartkoppies to be his replacement so he can continue living on the farm. *Ek was jonk, baie jonk*³⁷. That is how I came to work at Zwartkoppies (Kemape Frans Bafedi³⁸).

I was born in 1958 in Dannilton Limpopo Province...I arrived at Zwartkoppies farm in 1972. I did not attend the normal day school, but the night one. Mr Mahloko was teaching us maths and other subjects. I worked as a gardener under Van der Byl for seven years or so (Simon Minaar Bafedi³⁹).

Due to their vulnerability, children become victims of forced labour because their bargaining powers are weak; also because children do not know how to exercise the power to have recourse to law to protect their rights. It is for these reasons that international organisations such as the ILO have produced a set of rules and regulations that outlaw the use of child labour (Vambe, 2013: 17). Despite the existence of Article 2(1) of the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), in the early 1970's Kwenda 1 and their siblings had to work.

³⁷ Translated in English as 'I was young very young.'

³⁸ Kemape Frans Bafedi is the grandson of Makitimele "Kleinboy" Manyaka, the son of Makitimele's first child, Sara Bafedi from the first wife Tetedi Mphake Manyaka. I interviewed Frans on 13 March 2020.

³⁹ Grandson to Makitimele Kleinboy Manyaka, younger brother to Kemape Frans Bafedi.

This was so as apartheid was at its peak and black people's human rights in South Africa violated.

“I was around twelve or thirteen years old and I worked as a cleaner. Some would pay me with money but others would only give me food, I just had to be content with taking food home to share with my family. After they had eaten supper and I washed the dishes, they would give me food. My sisters and I had to do this job because my father was struggling...we didn't have much choice...I wanted to be a nurse (Kwenda 1⁴⁰).

In her book *Child Labor in Sub-Saharan Africa* (2004), Bass stresses the good side of child labour in which she holds that child labour can be a form of teaching children responsibility while they contribute to the economic growth of a country. Duncan and Bowman (2008: 30) opposes Bass's (2004) assertions by succinctly describing child labour as "work by children under 18 which is exploitative, hazardous or otherwise inappropriate for their age, detrimental to their schooling, or social, physical, mental, spiritual or moral development". I too contend to Bass's claim in that, for many families such as that of Manyaka and Kwenda whose children were forced out of school to work on a farm so their families could continue living on the farm, child labour is a representation of dreams destroyed and destinies denied.

UNSEALING THE ARCHIVE

Archives are remains, remnants, ruins that are situated in past lives and events but continue to live in the presence (Jonker & Till, 2009: 306). At times archives operate as a more immediate and evident enforcement of authority. As institutions, archives wield power over the administrative, legal, and fiscal accountability of governments, corporations and individuals. Archives as

⁴⁰ Kwenda 1 is member of the Kwenda family who chose to remain anonymous.

records have the power in the shaping and direction of historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity. They tend to influence how we know ourselves as individuals, groups and societies (Payne, 2006: 8-9). Mark Sealy MBE and LE BAL director Diane Dufour challenge us to view archives from multiple perspectives and multiple curations so as to entrap ourselves from viewing archives as the ultimate single truth (Sealy& Dafour : 2017).

Upon contacting the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Jagger Library inquiring about the Sammy Marks records, I was informed that there was a box that is yet to be sorted and was out of campus; thus access to these records was not plausible. In that particular box were records of 'servants' I was tracing. This development presented a stumbling block to my search in uncovering histories of the Zwartkoppies "servants". Fortunately, permission was eventually granted to access these 'unsorted' records. Until I accessed this archive pertaining to Sammy Marks's estate which were transferred to the UCT through the Jewish Society, this box was comfortable in some corner or shelf until it was unsettled. The records in files ranged from water statements to wages and accommodation of 'servants'. It is vital to read archives as we would literature by considering the context of record keeping and observing the language in the text that are "simultaneously multivalent and unstable enough to allow a point of entry to inspect and rearrange its building-blocks" (Matthews, 2015: 216).

The power of archives can be seen in how they are able to transcend time and space. Conversely, this power can allow for manipulation and seizure wherein records can in part or in their entirety be removed from their repositories to suit a desired agenda. Archives can be activated again and again by different societal powers and purposes and for different audiences (Karabinos, 2013: 282). Despite the omission of some 'servants' or their descendants in the Sammy Marks archival records, the gaps these records present have allowed me to

interrogate them further and cross-reference with other sources, such as oral and settlement evidence.

THE ARCHIVAL TRAIL

Our willingness to move beyond ideas of the “perfect archive,” to take interpretive leaps through interdisciplinary approaches, are critical to the “continued creation of a multicultural history”. The discordance in the many voices can also create a kind of silence; this silence may be eased by our faulty assumption that those archives are somehow more complete as we still have the questions of who is, and is not, represented in those archives (Harris, 2014: 80). Karabinos (2013: 282), a historian and archivist, postulates that not everything is documented, and what is documented, is not always archived and what is archived, is not always preserved. Therefore, the making of the archive is a skewed representation created by those who control the information. Archival practices, therefore, directly influence how the future will remember the past in that; the way a country represents and remembers its past, is also representative of its present situation.

Archives contain surviving traces of the past that promote reflection, followed by the fashioning of an understanding of what people have felt, thought, and done in the world. The archive is never finished. The file may have been closed, but it will be reactivated again and again. Every interaction, intervention, interrogation, and interpretation by creator, user, and archivist is an activation of the record (Macknight, 2011: 107).

There appears to be inconsistencies and gaps in the records pertaining to the black workers in the 1970’s, specifically, the omission of Frans Bafedi, a former ‘servant’ and member of the Manyaka family which is one of the families that have worked and lived on the Zwartkoppies farm the longest. Frans Bafedi is referred to as “Frans 2”, and does not feature in any other records. It was only

through my collection of oral accounts that I was able to trace and decipher that “Frans 2” is Frans Bafedi. Out of all 1960’s and 1970’s ‘servants’ that appear in the archival records, Frans Bafedi is the only surviving servant. Embedded in historical archives are opportunities that allow us not only to find creative ways of using the archives, but also moving outside of them, into different disciplinary research spaces (Harris,2014: 80).

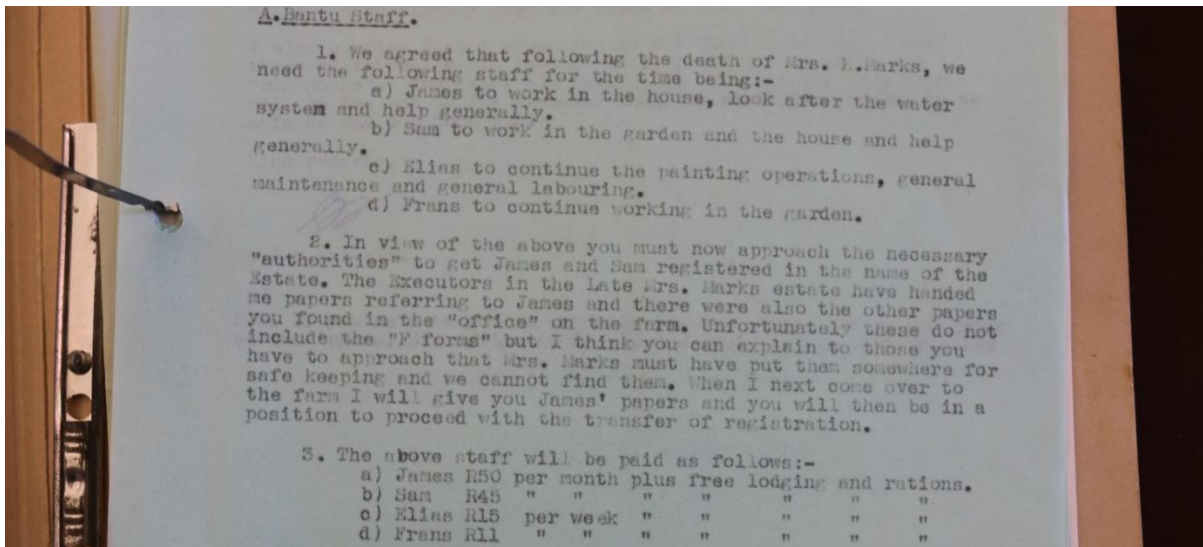


Figure 8

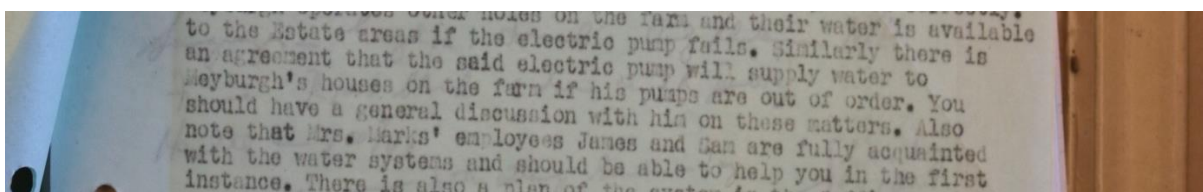
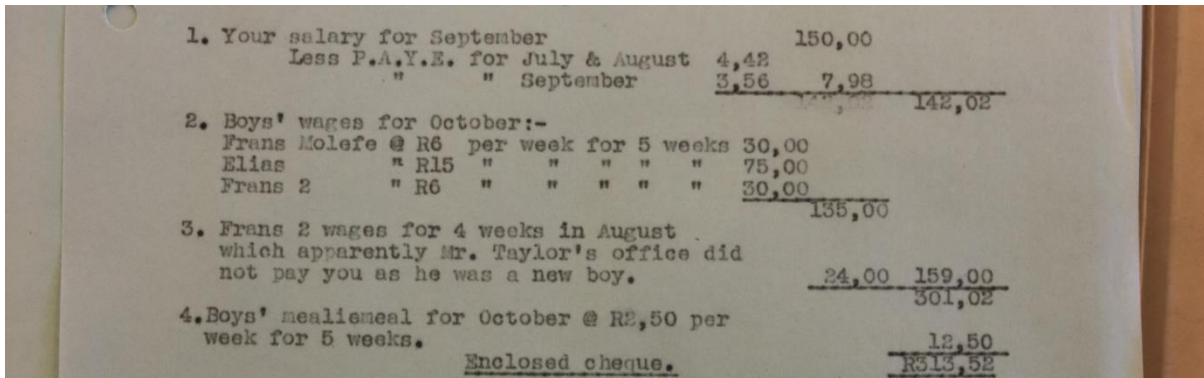


Figure 9

The archival records (figure 8 and figure 9) above support the assertion that James Kwenda and Sam Magagula worked inside the house of the Marks family when Joe Marks was staying at Zwartkoppies farm. Although I could not locate relatives of Sam Magagula, archival records show that he worked for the Marks family in the 1970’s and continued to do so even after the house was declared a museum in 1986. In a letter addressed to J.S.N Maisels from the Director of the museum at the time, it is stated that “temporary accommodation would be

provided to Sam Magagula in the South-Western corner of the premises”⁴¹. Sam Magagula’s employment at Zwartkoppies was also corroborated by Saul Makwela, Oupa Mtambo and Frans Bafedi. Oupa Ntambo⁴², Kwenda 1 and Bafedile Saul Makwela⁴³ all corroborated the information in the archival records.

A member of the Kwenda family referred to as Kwenda 1 in this research also mentioned that both Sam Magagula and Elias Bokaba worked and lived on the farm. According to Kwenda 1, Elias Bokaba got ill at some point and was subsequently taken to hospital and that was the last time they ever heard or saw him.



| | |
|---|--------|
| 1. Your salary for September | 150,00 |
| Less P.A.Y.E. for July & August | 4,42 |
| " " September | 3,56 |
| | 7,98 |
| | 142,02 |
| 2. Boys' wages for October:- | |
| Frans Molefe @ R6 per week for 5 weeks | 30,00 |
| Elias " R15 " " " " " | 75,00 |
| Frans 2 " R6 " " " " " | 30,00 |
| | 135,00 |
| 3. Frans 2 wages for 4 weeks in August | |
| which apparently Mr. Taylor's office did | |
| not pay you as he was a new boy. | 24,00 |
| | 159,00 |
| 4. Boys' mealmeal for October @ R2,50 per | |
| week for 5 weeks. | 12,50 |
| <u>Enclosed cheque.</u> | 171,52 |

Figure 10

It was common practice for farm workers or those working as gardeners and domestic workers to be referred to as “boy” or “girl” by the masters and farm owners during the colonial and apartheid eras. This was to demonstrate the degradation of black workers. It is for that reason that, in the Sammy Marks records, we find that ‘black’ men who worked as ‘servants’ were being referred to as boys irrespective of their age. Someone like Frans Bafedi, only referred to

⁴¹ A letter dated 17/09/1986 from Mrs W. Aukema to Maisels the oldest grandson of Sammy Marks. This letter form part of the Sammy Marks records housed in the Jagger Library at the University of Cape Town.

⁴² Oupa Ntambo and Saul Makwela are current employees of the Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum whom I interviewed on 05 February 2020.

⁴³ Bafedile Saul Makwela is a current employee at Ditsong National Museum of Cultural History and worked at the Sammy Marks Museum in 1985. I interviewed Bafedile on 17 March 2020.

as “Frans 2” in the records was 39 years old in 1976 however was still called a boy⁴⁴.

Through each activation, the archives leave fingerprints which are attributes to the archive’s infinite meaning. All these activations are acts of co-creatorship determining the record’s meaning. A record is never finished, never complete; the record ‘is always in a process of becoming’ (Ketelaar, 2008: 12).

ORAL HISTORY

Until the mid-twentieth century the methods of history production and other forms of knowledge by indigenous peoples before contact with Europeans was given less attention by both historians and historiographers. A notion held by most western scholars was that sub-Saharan Africa did not have a history and historical accounts in this region were non-existent before the arrival of Europeans. This view was held as a consequence of the developments that escalated in the nineteenth and twentieth century which claimed that Africans in the Sub-Sahara were too primitive to have the ability of grasping a practice such as history. In substantiating and justifying this muting of precolonial history of the people, the colonisers excluded all material in the archives that could supplement the fact that these societies had a history. The disregarded material included artefacts and myths which were subsequently categorised merely as culture incapable of having any form of history. It is only the material chosen by these colonial authorities that were certified as factual and documentary (Hamilton, Mbenga & Ross: 2010: 4).

Henige (2009: 131-133) argues that, however complex and intricate our history may be, through testing they can survive the same way as written sources. Oral

⁴⁴ This record is contained in a letter dated 21st September 1976 by S.J.N. Maisels to Van Kleef. This is part of the Sammy Marks records housed at Jagger Library at UCT.

narratives can be passed down to many generations and still remain intact. I employ oral testimonies to mitigate the application of both archives and written texts which in themselves too often reflect bias perspectives of the composers' influence by circumstances of their time (Hamilton, Mbenga & Ross, 2010: 4). "Oral history has become representative of an antidote able to restore and reconcile divergent pasts "(Ondaatje, 2009: 125). Oral history has sometimes been described as alternative history or unofficial history. It is so, as oral history often assumes a chief position in offering oral evidence to various sources of information. More often than not, it is the life experiences of ordinary men and women that give a new dimension into the understanding of the past (Counce, 1994: ix).

Oral history relates to oral testimonies concerning the past told either by participants who were present during those events, through eye-witness who lived during the generation or period in which the events took place (Alagoa, 2006: 13). This form of history as a method, seeks to broaden "participation in history through faithfully recording of the life stories of those usually excluded from consideration". While the other families that lived and worked on the farm feature in the archival records I accessed at the University of Cape Town, the Manyaka family's records are undetectable. Unlike documentary history which adequately serves elite groups, oral history presents a rather subversive stance that contributes to the general understanding of the past while we make sense of the present. It studies the social bonds that tie people together and contribute to their sense of identity (Cauce, 1994: 10-11). Oral history is a source that un-fences the superficial state of written sources which is usually presented as the ultimate truth.

Habitually the concept of history is viewed as a general phenomenon without taking into cognisance that it is in fact specific to time and place. Even though this concept of history was first introduced to southern Africa during the

colonial era, it was also denied to precolonial societies to whom as a result their histories were written for them. Historians from ancient times relied upon eyewitness accounts of significant events, until the nineteenth-century development of an academic history discipline led to the primacy of archival research and documentary sources, and the marginalisation of oral evidence. It is for this reason that I employ oral testimonies in this study so as to cross-check what is not recorded in the archives. Gradually the validity of oral evidence was accepted and its usefulness was recognised (Hamilton, Mbenga & Ross, 2010: 3; Thomson, 2007: 50-51).

Oral histories are loosely used to uncover or fill in the gaps´ that exist in historical context through perspectives and experiences that have been largely ignored or voices that have been suppressed. Oral history has been vital in uncovering and capturing the history of marginalised groups, communities of shared memory, political struggle and strife, and social history, while also being used to capture family histories, lived experience, and much more. Sometimes history is written for others without human experience or human voices (Ferderer, 2015: 13).

Oral historians showed how to determine the bias and fabrication of memory by adopting methods in psychology and anthropology, through to the significance of retrospection and the effects of the interviewer upon remembering. “From sociology they adopted methods of representative sampling, and from documentary history they brought rules for checking the reliability and internal consistency of their sources”. Therefore, these guidelines become useful for reading memories and for combining them with other historical sources to determine what happened in the past. Thus memory becomes both the subject and the source for oral history (Thomson, 2007: 54-55). The fundamental discord lies on the evidentiary basis of oral testimony which emphasise that

good oral evidence must derive from meticulous process of cross-referencing and consensus (Breckenridge, 1999: 138; Vansina, 1985: 178).

VOICES OF ‘SERVANTS’ AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

Accounts depicted here are translated verbatim so as not to misrepresent the interviewees. It has been a laborious journey to locate most of these servants and even when I did, there was great reluctance from others. I gathered some chose not to go back to the past, while others were just anxious to be interviewed despite my demonstrating the subject matter of my research. Some of these family members indicated that they were not interested in participating in the research. Although I was only able to interview ‘servants’ and descendants of three families, it is worth noting that there are other families that lived and others still living on the farm. The Mathibela, Rakomako, Masilela, Maswanganyi and Molefi have left the farm while the Kwenda, Lodi and Sibande occupy different portions of the farm. The Manyaka left the farm during the course of my research.

“I was born on 04 April 1956. I was born on this farm. My brothers were born here too. Initially our home was the white house that is now occupied by the Boer man (farm manager’s cottage), from what our parents told us. Where our family house is currently situated used to be an office. That was Joe Marks’s office. My father was a foreman. My father was Kleinboy Manyaka. He’s originally from Limpopo and came here while he was still very young. He worked at the dairy to milk cows. The reason why we were moved from farm manager’s cottage was due to my brothers’ noise. After being moved from the farm manager’s cottage Joe Marks built a house for us where it is currently situated. Joe Marks died and Meyberg took over the farm. I was taken out of school so as to work on the farm. I went to school at Kutumela Primary School. I was forced to

drop out of school to work on the farm. I had to work because we were afraid that they would evict my family from the farm. After some time, Meyberg sold his portion of the farm and left. Next, the portion on the Nellmapius side was also sold. This farm is very big; it covers a large area, right up to Eerste Fabrieken. Portions of this farm have been sold bit by bit. After a while, a meeting was called; it can be thirteen years ago, we were told to move out of the farm. We asked how possible that was and were told that Mario had bought the portion we were occupying. He is said to be a developer, he builds houses. One of the Marks family members sold the farm to Mario. We told them that we will not move here, where will we go? We were born here; our brothers were also born here” (Moses Popotane Manyaka).

Although the Manyaka do not appear on the archival records, their family house has been another aspect to supplement their narrative in that they have settled in this farm for generations. No historian would want to rely only on oral accounts without also making use of other human made features (Tonkin, 1992: 95-96).

“I was born in 1958 in Dannilton Limpopo Province...I arrived at Zwartkoppies farm in 1972. At Zwartkoppies I was staying with my maternal grandmother Karlina (Caroline) Mmathokwana Manyaka who worked for Joe Marks as a cook. I did not attend the normal day school, but the night one. Mr Mahloko was teaching us maths and other subjects. I worked as a gardener under van der Byl for seven years or so...When I turned about 25 years my father called me back to Dannilton so I could go for initiation. Upon my return I looked for work at the factories in Silverton and was hired by Nissan. I left without saying goodbye to van der Byl. I also had to go look for a place to stay as I was not allowed to live on the farm while I was no longer working there. After a while, I

came back to the farm to visit the van der Byl⁴⁵. I wore a three piece suite. They were happy to see me or at least Mrs van der Byl, Mr van der Byl was an evil man... I later bought a Mercedes, a big one” (Simon Minaar Bafedi⁴⁶).

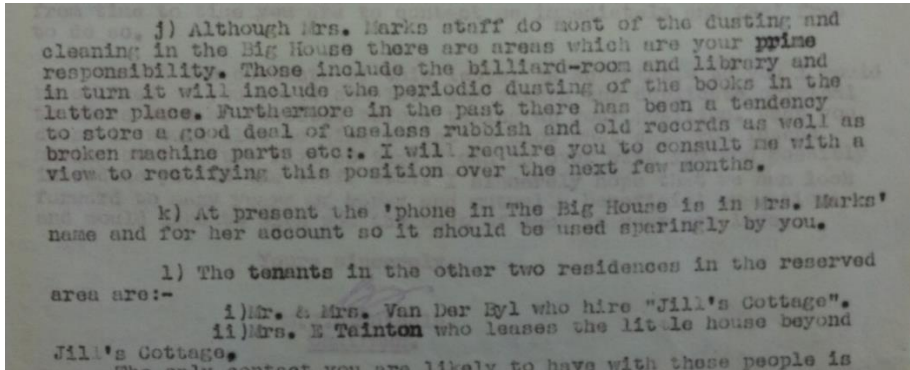


Figure 11

The ‘black’ man cannot take pleasure in his insularity. For him there is only one way out and it leads to the white world. Whence, his constant preoccupation of attracting the attention of a white man and his concern to be powerful like the white man (Fanon, 1967: 51). One thing that was apparent during an interview with Minaar Bafedi was how important it was for him to come back to the farm dressed in what would ordinarily have been associated with white people or people with money. He purposely aimed to show his former boss that even after being prohibited from staying on the farm, he could still achieve what white people can. What colonisation achieved was to brainwash black people into wanting to be white, conversely, inadvertently driving the white ‘man’ slaving to reach what was regarded as a human level (Fanon, 1967: 11).

“I was born here on this farm. My father arrived in 1950 and worked as a gardener and later as a chef. My father was 15 years old when he started

⁴⁵ The van der Byl occupied one of the cottages on the farm.

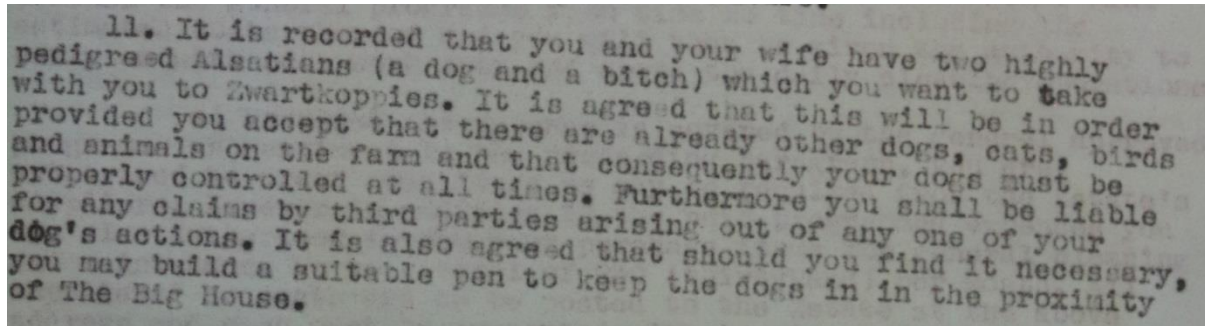
⁴⁶ Younger brother of Frans Bafedi-recorded only as Frans 2 in a letter written by S.J.N Meisels to Van Kleef on 21st September 1976.

working on the farm. He worked here in Zwartkoppies and in Vereeniging. He used to travel with *makgowa*⁴⁷. I went to Kutumela Molefi Primary School and after finishing my primary schooling I worked for different white families within Zwartkoppies...they lived in the cottages. I was around twelve or thirteen years old and I worked as a cleaner. Some would pay me with money but others would only give me food, I just had to be content with taking food home to share with my family. After they had eaten supper and I cleaned the dishes, they would give me food. My sisters and I had to do this job because my father was struggling...we didn't have much choice. I did not like the fact that our movement was restricted as we could not play freely like children would. The caretaker hated my brother, so whenever we played beyond the restricted area he would unleash the dogs. The one thing I hated the most while growing up was when a bell rang in the morning at 5am waking my father up to make breakfast for Joe Marks and his family. There was a bell connected to our house yet we did not have electricity” (Kwenda 1).

During apartheid, the worker was not free. Many of these workers consisting mainly of men working in the factories and farms struggled with wages with their employers during the day, and after work they also faced another struggle of the cost of living (Izwi lase Township, 1983: 2). That is the struggle that James Kwenda faced in providing for his family which led to his children assisting him and consequently becoming child ‘servants’.

“Our movement was restricted, thus; we were unable to play freely like children would. There were lots of dogs, big dogs” (Kwenda 1).

⁴⁷ A term used to refer to white people in Sotho-Tswana languages.



11. It is recorded that you and your wife have two highly pedigreed Alsatians (a dog and a bitch) which you want to take with you to Zwartkoppies. It is agreed that this will be in order provided you accept that there are already other dogs, cats, birds and animals on the farm and that consequently your dogs must be properly controlled at all times. Furthermore you shall be liable for any claims by third parties arising out of any one of your dog's actions. It is also agreed that should you find it necessary, you may build a suitable pen to keep the dogs in in the proximity of The Big House.

Figure 12

“What I loved about growing up in the farm was when the Marksese threw sweets at us to catch over their car windows. The other thing I loved, was when my father brought us soft porridge from the Marksese house. Our family photographs burnt in a fire that caught my shack after I had left my parents’ house. I left Zwartkoppies to work in the farms around Benoni. My daughter also worked there, picking up potatoes...When Zwartkoppies became a museum, I had hope that our lives would change but nothing has changed, even in the new South Africa” (Kwenda 1).

I was born in 1937 in Dannilton. My maternal grandfather was Makitimela Manyaka. He worked in Zwartkoppies for many years. He had three wives. He worked the white farmers’ fields, from ploughing to harvesting. In Zwartkoppies my grandfather worked for Joe Marks as a gardener too. He was old, no longer able to work. Four years went by without work and Joe Marks told my grandfather that he cannot continue to live on the farm while he is not working on the farm. Since his children had left the farm and working elsewhere, my grandfather could continue living on the farm on condition that one of his family members was working on the farm. Following Marks’s conditions of stay, my grandfather and his second wife came to Dannilton to ask my parents that I come to Zwartkoppies to be his replacement so he can continue living

on the farm. *Ek was jonk, baie jonk*⁴⁸. That is how I came to work at Zwartkoppies” (Kemape Frans Bafedi).

“...When Mamelodi was formed, many of my relatives moved there. It was nice growing up on the farm, but the challenge came when we had to go to high school. There was only one primary school, Kutumela Molefi. This school was built by my great-grandfather. Kutumela was both a teacher and a traditional healer. The Marks family helped him in however way they could. The school was built with mud bricks. My grandfather Frans Motshegoa was born in 1912. We had agricultural fields. My grandfather also had cows which we milked. He also worked for the Marks family. Remember in the past you could not live on a farm for free, so my grandfather had to work. He was not remunerated with money but the Markses gave him mealie meal for porridge, salt and fruits; so that’s what we ate. My grandfather worked the Marks gardens, he also cleaned the yard. My grandfather Frans Molefi was the last one to work on the farm. After he was released from his duties, none of my family members was required to work on the farm. In the past we used to receive letters stating that we are the original residents of Zwartkoppies and that we should never move. We did not know, but we kept the letters safe. We did not have to work as children; it was only my grandfather who was working on the farm. The Markses found my great-great grandfather, great grandfather Kutumela and grandfather then they worked for them. The Markses found them here. You know during times of oppression white people could just choose a place they wanted to occupy and if they found people, those people would be under them and work as their labourers, as was the case with my family. Most of my relatives left the farm and moved. There were families of Lodi, Manyaka, Kwenda,

⁴⁸ Translated in English as ‘I was young very young.’

Sibande, Matjila, Mathibela, Sibande and Rakomako. Currently, the families that live on the farm are of Lodi, Sibande, Kwenda, Manyaka, Matjila, Maswanganyi, Masilela and Molefi. The Manyaka had two households of the first and second wife. The Rakomako were promised a house in Mamelodi. We were told about the house and part of the farm being declared a museum. There were meetings at the Sammy Marks house from time to time that we accompanied my grandfather to, but we would remain outside and not be part of those meetings (Sana Maselatole Mabogoane).

Oral history enables us to “be able to hear someone’s actual voice, with all the subtleties of speech that sometimes contribute as much as the words themselves, with the original accent delivered exactly as they said it is something very special”. The advantage of oral evidence is that participants can be asked to expand on what they have said and their evidence can be challenged and scrutinized immediately (Caunce, 1994: 16-17)

FORCED REMOVALS AT ZWARTKOPPIES

The resettlement of Africans in concentrated settlements in what was the Ciskei goes as far back as 1830s. Attempts to control and manage the conditions of labour tenancy in favour of white land owners was elevated with the passing of the 1913 Natives Land Act (NLA), which aimed at stamping out all forms of independent black tenancy. The NLA ‘prohibited sharecropping on white-owned farms, limited the number of labouring families on a single farm to five, and “laid down that all black tenants were to be defined as servants and not just as individually contracted employees”. In most cases these areas which were called "Black spot" communities, have lived in their areas for generations. In some cases they have legal title to the land and in nearly all they were forced to leave homes, schools, churches to occupy cultivated land (de Wet, 1994: 359).

...“This farm is very big; it covers a large area, right up to Eerste Fabrieken. Portions of this farm have been sold bit by bit. After a while, a meeting was called, it can be thirteen years ago, we were told to move out of the farm. We asked how possible that was and were told that Mario had bought the portion we were occupying. He is said to be a developer, he builds houses. One of the Marks family members sold the farm to Mario... We told them that we will not move here, where will we go? We were born here; our brothers were also born here. We told them we will not move, over our dead bodies. I arranged a meeting with Mario I told Mario:” I am not my sister Stephina whom he harassed. I will talk to Malema⁴⁹ so that more people can occupy this land since we are not safe here. Twenty shacks will do. I will make sure you lose this place” (Moses Popotane Manyaka).

In 1950 the Population Registration Act and the Group Areas Act were both passed by parliament and subsequently amended several times. These two acts were aimed at enforcing segregation:

The first Act provided for the population of the country to be classified into distinct racial groups. The second Act provided that separate zones in urban areas should be set aside for the exclusive residential and commercial use of each group and that no persons could live, own property or conduct business except in the area set aside for the group to which they were assigned (Christopher, 1987: 200).

Even for South Africans it was difficult to grasp the true atrociousness of the apartheid system. Apartheid was never static, its roots reached deep into the past but came to develop distinctly novel features by transforming 'native reserves' into 'homelands' and then into 'independent national states' (Hallett, 1984: 301).

⁴⁹ Malema is the surname of Julius Malema, the leader of one of the opposition parties in South Africa called the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF).

One of the forced removals that took place following the passing of the 1950 legislations was the Sophiatown removals in 1953 whereby the apartheid government issued orders to the residents to move. Many Africans had title deeds to land and property in Sophiatown and adjoining areas, but the government was intent in turning them into landless workers. The racist government also prohibited occupation in proximity of “white” residential areas, such as Newclare and Westdene. The efforts of the African National Congress (ANC) of calling on the people to resist the move and the anti-removal meetings held were in vain as the forced removals proceeded nonetheless (Weinberg, 1981: 101).

“...There was a developer that came here in 2007 and we were told that he has bought the portion that we were occupying. As I speak, the Manyaka house has been broken down and a road is being constructed. The Rakomako family left in 2010. In 2015 we were told to move and we refused. A TLB truck was sent to breakdown my family house. In 2007 Joe Marks’s grandson Maisels came to tell us about the sale of the land and told us not to worry. He also told us that the developer will built us a house on the farm. Things changed out of the blue and we were told to move. Our house was destroyed, so was that of Maswanganyi. Other residents moved. They broke down our house while we were inside; they sent a TLB to destroy our house. Subsequent to this forced removal, we contacted Land Affairs and our case is currently in the courts” (Sana Mabogoane).

Farmers, a key element in the National Party constituency, had no difficulty swerving the legislation they needed to bring about an end to labour tenancy. The Bantu Laws Amended Act of 1964 enabled the minister to prohibit tenancy within any area. Large numbers of families were evicted by farmers and Department of Bantu Administration officials. Many of these families were

removed to rural slums, which were called closer settlements. Forced removals in South Africa were executed over decades through the enforcement of various legislations such as Pass system, Group Areas Acts and Coloured Labour policy (Unterhalter, 1987: 21). Oosthuizen and Molokoe (2002: 345) describe forced removal as a process of control, division and segregation of people. This act is achieved through “forcing people to move from one place of residence to another with disregard of their opinion and approval”. From the interview with Sana Mabogoane, it was apparent that the Molefi family’s voice did not matter to the developer; hence their forceful removal went through. Irrespective of having arrived before Sammy Marks on Zwartkoppies and the fourth and fifth generation still living on the farm, the developer went ahead and destroyed the Molefi ancestral home in 2015.

AN ELUSIVE FREEDOM IN A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

For the leader of Black Consciousness, Bantu Steve Biko, the notion of freedom for black people meant overcoming not only racism, but being recognized as human. He believed that freedom meant free “participation by all members of society, catering for the full expression of the self in a freely changing society dominated by the will of the people” (Gibson, 1988: 9).

“...My wish is to be treated the same way as others, like the way white people are being treated in this place. All these white people arrived way later than us on this farm but they have everything, their homes are beautiful. But what have we, the same house that my father built for us when he arrived here in 1950? We do not even have fencing for security but the rest of the white tenants have. I’m forever anxious that we may be kicked out of the farm at any time. We do not have title deed so we are unsure of our future here” (Kwenda 1).

Certainly apartheid in South Africa left a legacy of great economic inequality and dismal poverty. Thus the ruling African National Congress (ANC) election campaign tagline, 'a Better life for all' aimed at acknowledging that the struggle for liberation equally meant the struggle to annihilate the effects of racial capitalism (Madlingozi, 2007: 77).

“Although we now have electricity, it is *izinyoga*⁵⁰ connection and we had to fight for it. We are unable to do renovations or restorations to this house because we were told that it is more than sixty years thus to that effect protected by heritage authorities. We have been promised on numerous times that we will get a shower and proper sanitation, but to date nothing has changed” (Kwenda 2⁵¹).

Progressives around the globe observed with admiration as Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected president of South Africa. Many observers were amazed by the relative peace that accompanied the transition, given centuries of oppression and unrest. Thenceforward they declared South Africa the 'miracle nation' (Madlingozi, 2007: 78). This remarkable transition was followed in 1996 by the crafting and approval of a transformed and inclusive constitution within which the Bill of Rights is embedded. Sadly some components of the society dream of enjoying equal rights as others.

“We were allowed to meet with other residents of Zwartkoppies and surrounding farms, but the manager told us not to say anything in these meetings since we had nothing to worry about pertaining to our residence in Zwartkoppies. These meeting were meant to discuss our future in the farms as developers are saturating these areas” (Kwenda 2).

⁵⁰ *Izinyoga* is a Zulu word translating snakes. However, in this context the word means illegal electricity connection and is also widely used in townships and many areas of the South African society to refer to electrical cable thieves.

⁵¹ Kwenda 2 is another member of the Kwenda family who chose to remain anonymous.

Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution (1996) encompasses the Bill of Rights to which Freedom of Assembly is entrenched in Section 17. This Section 17 which is often read interchangeably or in tandem with Freedom of Association in Section 18 states that it is “ the individual right or ability of people to come together and collectively express, promote, pursue, and defend their collective or shared ideas. The right to freedom of association is recognized as a human right, a political right and a civil liberty. Even though they were “allowed” to attend community meetings, the Kwenda family members’ participation was restricted; therefore, their right to freedom of assembly and association could not fully be enjoyed in a democratic South Africa.

“No one informed us that a portion of the farm where my family house is situated would be sold or leased to someone for developments. After the sale all services that we used to receive from the main house which is now a museum were cut without any notification. Things changed abruptly. The water supply was cut and security personnel ceased from monitoring our house”. Many of my family members died and it was no longer safe living in that house, so we moved and would go to the house every now and then. The house was broken into numerous times. This developer who had bought the portion we occupied later on organised security personnel to monitor his land so that meant our family house could also be monitored. However, in 2019 the security personnel left the area thence our house was broken into continuously” (Moses Popotane Manyaka).

“Now my grandparents’ home is vandalised. It is in ruins” (Geoffrey Manyaka).

“When a democratic South Africa came into being in 1994 I thought life would change for us, but all is still the same” (Kwenda 1).

“We were in 2015 bulldozed on my ancestral land. Our house was destroyed because of new developments” (Sana Mabogoane).

“We were promised a shower and proper sanitation a long time ago, we are still waiting” (Kwenda 2).

Although the country transitioned from apartheid era into democracy, the living conditions of the Kwenda family have not moved an inch. The Kwenda family occupies a portion of the Zwartkoppies farm belonging to DITSONG Museums of South Africa, an entity of the Department of Arts and Culture. However, the family is in distress as no department seems to take responsibility in providing basic services for the family; thus this family remains just as invisible as it was during apartheid.

CONCLUSION

I find myself sprawled in the aftermath of the colonial and apartheid legacies. By virtue of being ‘black’ I have inherited the effects of systems of oppression. These aftermaths positioned me at the Zwartkoppies farm so as to be part of reconstructing the discarded and ignored voices in especially archives. The feeling of uncovering histories of servants of the Marks family was heart-wrenching as the majority of these servants are still struggling for freedom in this supposedly free and democratic South Africa. Scratching surfaces and excavating histories that had been buried meant that I had to be committed to taking the risk of tackling subjects that are uncomfortable to deal with. It is through the silences that were intentionally crafted by those who were in power that today we find ourselves asking pertinent questions of the marginalised.

Not only did I rely on testimonies by descendants of servants, but I also cross-checked what is in the archives and physical evidence in the form of settlements to corroborate the testimonies. My inclusion of oral history in this study was to cast light on the shadowed histories and excavate those that have been hidden. Chapter 5 deals with the Sammy Marks House now a museum and the question of representation and inclusivity as a public space and the impact that its colonial state has in perpetuating exclusiveness in a democratic South Africa.

CHAPTER FIVE

NAVIGATING PLACE AND SPACE AT THE SAMMY MARKS MUSEUM POST-APARTHEID

As long as these tangible sites and objects exist, there is evidence that people were here, that their histories, their memories and their past mattered, and that they are here, still matter and will continue to matter in the future (Balachandran: 2016).

INTRODUCTION

I off-ramped from the old Bronkorspruit tarred road onto a dusty road with lots of blue gum trees. The number of these trees increased as I got closer to the museum. Upon passing through the gate, there appeared a white red roofed house. When I got to the house, I was met with a big well-looked after garden. The place felt uncomfortable; there was no doubt that I was in a white person's yard. After a tour through the house, there was nothing I could identify with as a black person. Of course, it was so because the house is Victorian. Despite being Victorian, there was no way that white people could have built the place and maintained it all by themselves. I asked the tour guide where were black people in the narrative? This tour guide responded by saying that that is the only narrative they were told to portray and that there should never be a mention of how Sammy Marks and his family treated 'black' people, otherwise visitors will stop coming to the museum. Sadia's museum experience in Aboulelah's *The Museum in Coloured Lights* (2001) came to mind after concluding the tour. Sadia experienced the absence of what Greenblatt (1991: 42) describes as resonance in that, an object being displayed, should have power, so much so that it reaches beyond its formal boundaries to "evoke the viewer's complex cultural and political forces from which it emerged". This prompted me to interrogating the issues of representation, identity, the audience to which the exhibit and narrative are intended for and wondered about those ignored. "Conservation in the twenty-first century can no longer just be about objects, but also about the people whose lives are inscribed on them" (Balachandran: 2016).

This chapter will look at the question of space and belonging and representation in a museum as a public space. The issue of freedom and Decoloniality of public spaces will also be discussed. I draw from my own daily experiences, interviews with workers and through personal observations.

SPACE AND RACIAL SEGREGATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Spatial segregation on the basis of race has its roots in the Black Land Act No 27 of 1913 and the Development Trust and Land Act No 18 of 1936; which provided for a separation of occupation and ownership on all urban land for Africans vis-a-vis other groups. This was subsequently aggravated by a number of legislations based on the Population Registration Act of 1950, which defines and determines the race groups to which all individuals are held to belong under the dictums of apartheid. ‘Africans’ who lived and worked in South Africa’s towns had their rights increasingly restricted through segregation laws on the basis of race. The amended Urban Areas Act passed in 1952 and 1957 stipulated that only Africans who “were born and have lived continuously in the area, or have worked continuously for ten years or have been in continuous lawful residence for fifteen years and have never left the area since, have a right to live within it” (van der Horst, 1964: 30-32).

The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act No 49 of 1953, afforded powers to impose racial segregation in terms of any public premise, amenity or vehicle; while the Group Areas Act No 36 of 1966 provides for different areas for exclusive ownership and occupation by members of a particular race groups. Any member of a race group for which an area has not been zoned, may not own or occupy land and premises within such a proclaimed group area. The Groups Areas Act was applied in conjunction with the Community Development Act 3 of 1966 which provided the machinery for removing and resettling people within proclaimed group areas and the Black Community Development Act 4 of 1984 which prescribes for the proclamation of townships for Africans in urban areas and (Schlemmer, 1986: 4-5).

By and large, South Africans know that the apartheid regime was not entirely successful in defining identity; hence the continued attempts in the past to cross

racial boundaries in the hope of accessing resources that were enjoyed by the oppressor. Boswell contends that not only is racism perpetuating segregation, but also, it is changing form and being maintained in South Africa (Boswell, 2014: 1). Colonial and apartheid remnants, including racial stereotypes across different races, are still dominant in our communities, both in public and private spaces. The racial divisions and tensions continues rise in South Africa today. “A democratic dream of a rainbow nation remains just a dream with racism continuing to raise its ugly head in the democratic South Africa” (Mashau, 2014: 1).

Because of the long history of dysfunctional public spaces in South Africa, there has always been segregation, especially with the exclusion of non-white parts of the population. This has resulted in different segregated public spaces developing their own cultures, norms and values (Paasche, 2012: 46).

MUSEUMS: COLONIAL SPACES OF POWER

Because of the colonial origin of museums, there remains an enduring influence upon these institutions and the manner in which the public view them. In their reference to the state of scientific colonialism in which museums and anthropologists operate, Aboriginal writers are of the view that cultural colonialism continues to control the representation of Aboriginal people. In the United States of America, African Americans have rejected museums as places of personal reflection and historical affirmation as their contributions and history were ignored and expressions absent (Clay, 1994: 1).

South African society represents a pattern which has emerged out of entrenched settler colonialism where whites have a perception of their dwelling areas as fragments of Europe, in style, order, patterns of administration and neighbourhood interaction. The possible emergence of Third World conditions in established white family suburbs is likely to be

vehemently resisted, quite apart from the racial issue (Schlemmer, 1986: 5)

As cultural institutions, museums play a part in the constructing and reconstructions of nations through telling stories.

Voortrekker Monument represents lingering elements of past power on one hilltop of the city of Tshwane. On the opposite hilltop is the post-democracy Freedom Park monument celebrating different ideas of history. The Voortrekker Monument is a private initiative that was completed in 1948 to “embody the triumph of resurgent Afrikaner nationalism” (Kros, 2012: 40). Freedom Park was initiated as a public project during the presidency of Thabo Mbeki (1999–2008) to reflect an “indigenous aesthetic that acknowledges African memorial practices and is not seen to be indebted to European traditions” (Mabin, 2015: 31).

A SOUTH AFRICAN MUSEUM AFTER APARTHEID

The official demise of the apartheid regime was marked by the 1994 first South African democratic elections; however, the mammoth task that lay ahead, was to setting up a workable economy; cultural and political infrastructure that would be a representative of all South Africans. Rooted in the difficulty to install these workable cooperations, was finding ways to navigate and negotiate across ethnic and colour divides underpinning the enacted prejudices and discriminations under apartheid (Corsane, 2004:1-3).

As far back as 1987, there were discussions on the need to transform a South African Museum and was highlighted in a declaration made at the South African Museums Association (SAMA) conference of the same year:

that South African museums actively assist all of our various communities better to understand the circumstances of both their separate

and common history so as to give them a clearer view of their present relationships and thereby how they can be more harmoniously involved one with the other in the future; that South African museums sincerely strive to be seen to belong to all South Africans irrespective of colour, creed, or gender (Corsane, 2004: 7).

Ten years following the SAMA meeting during Heritage Day, Nelson Mandela pointed out the challenge that lies ahead in transforming South African Museums from their colonial and apartheid representation to one that is inclusive of a South African society. Thirty three years after the SAMA meeting and twenty three years after Mandela's speech, the narrative at Sammy Marks Museum remains the same. It is still the same narrative that praises Sammy Marks's entrepreneurial achievements and his wealth. The narrative at this museum is one that deliberately ignores the fact that there was at some point black people who contributed to Marks's wealth and the care of his family subsequent to his death. Twenty six years after democracy, the Sammy Marks Museum attracts 98% of whites and the remaining two percent being made up of school children, who visit as part of an excursion and black visitors who visit once in five to seven months.

THE SAMMY MARKS HOUSE: A COLONIAL OBJECT

The Sammy Marks House and its gardens at Zwartkoppies Farm were built to mimic the Victorian era, thus classified as a Victorian house (Naude, 2003: 143). Named after Queen Victoria, the Victorian age in England, Scotland and Wales was one of the great technological advances and population growth characterised by self-confidence and vigorous expansion. Country houses in England were built for wealthy entrepreneurs whom Marks aspired to mirror with Zwaartkoppies. Accordingly Zwaartkoppies was more than just one of his properties, but an encompassment of his social aspirations and a means to attain them (Botha, 2012: 21).

Marks spent a fortune transforming Zwartkoppies into a posh English estate he desired so as to reflect the Victorian Era. The house was renovated in the 1890's to accommodate his family that was growing in number which by 1897 consisted of six children, four boys and two girls. A German architect, De Waan who came to the Transvaal due to its flourishing wealth, was appointed to design the original alterations to the structure, while John Johnson Kirkness, a Scottish contractor, executed them. Kirkness was also responsible for the building of a large part of the Republican Pretoria (Mendelsohn, 1991: 37). "The wall finishes throughout the house are its crowning glory, giving the house its sense of grandeur". Towards the end of the century an Italian artist whose name is not recorded, was employed to paint the decorative murals and effects in the house. It is, however, speculated that it may have been Alfredo Polvanni, who had a studio in Pretoria at the time. These walls were painted in the reigning fashion of the time which bore a very strong resemblance to those in the stately home Brodsworth Hall in England, depicting trends which were copied locally in Pretoria (Du-Plessis-Pye, 2016: 7).

Additions to the house consisted of an impressive and spacious billiard room, a "status symbol supreme in affluent Victorian homes" (Mendelsohn, 1991:103.). Here his wife Bertha and their visitors played billiards, while Marks, no sportsman, looked on. A miniature cue was ordered for the children. Marks also added a new stable, which he said looked quite like a mansion as it had room for at least fourteen horses and five carriages. The stable housed the Basuto (Basotho) ponies, Daisy, Poppins and the rest which his wife and children rode. Marks also ordered carriages and 'spiders' from America to add to the ones he already owned. Furthermore, Marks added features for his family's convenience, which included a telephone, a swimming pool and a tennis court of which he said its surface looked like 'kafir' huts⁵². Sammy also bought a

piano as most middle class Victorian families do, so as to enable his family to make music at home. Electricity was also added to the farm, generated by a turbine powered by a two and a half mile furrow running from a dam Marks built on the Pienaars River (Mendelsohn, 1991: 104.)

Sammy Marks married Bertha Guttman on 16 December 1884 at Sheffield, daughter of Tobias Guttman, the man that gave Marks a ship fare to South Africa in 1868 .The Guttman family had become a well-to-do, upper-middleclass Anglo-Jewish Victorian family (Mendelsohn, 1991: 1; Du-Plesis-Pye, 2016: 7). Sammy and Bertha together lived in Zwartkoppies. It was after marrying Bertha that they began importing furniture and other household essentials such as silver, crockery, cutlery and glass. Sammy was most of the time away on business, leaving Bertha to run the household and entertain guests⁵³. The couple had children by the names of: Louis, the eldest son who, after returning from England for schooling, was nicknamed Y.L (Young Lord) because of his demeanour, Montie, Gertrude, the eldest daughter whom Sammy called Girly and Gai by her friends and family, Leonora, Joseph Mordechai, named after Sammy's father and the farmer of the family who lived most of his life in the Zwartkoppies Hall, Theodaore referred to as Ted, the younger daughter, Fanny Beatrice who was also known as Dolly and Phillip who was the youngest son simply known as Phil. Only six of the Marks children survived beyond infancy (Du-Plesis-Pye, 2016: 7).

⁵² Although the use of cow dung is not widely used among black indigenous groups in South Africa as would have in the late 1800's and early 1900's, Marks here implies that the floor of his tennis court looks like it was made out of cow dung mixed with soil like black people's floors.

⁵³ The publication entitled "The Life and Times of Sammy Marks: with notes on the house and gardens" was compiled by Sammy Marks' grandson, Neil Maisels given to guests as handouts at the opening of the Sammy Marks Museum on 12 November 1986. Maisels was also the administrator of the Sammy Marks estate. The documents are currently housed at the Jagger Library 'Special Collections at the University of Cape Town under Sammy Marks Papers Additions unprocessed material.

As he fantasised, Marks transformed the Zwartkoppies landscape into a green wilderness through the importation of thousands of a diversity of trees, orchards and vineyards. This landscape that seemed to have been inspired by the forests at Lithuania in his youth during the mid-nineteenth century, appeared to have engraved a lasting impression on Marks; hence his attempt to recreate the forest in Zwartkoppies. Around 20 000 to 30 000 trees were destroyed by wild fire in 1896. One other aspect to Sammy's youth was the vodka stills and taverns that surrounded him, mostly run by Jews for local peasants. Clearly Marks carried this seed with him to South Africa when in his middle years he focused on distilling liquor on the Highveld for black migrant workers on the mines of Witwatersrand (Mendelsohn, 1991: 4). In addition was a maze, croquet lawn and a grand avenue of trees, a cricket cum football field for the Marks boys and a park in which he sat during the evenings to enjoy the breeze from the hills. This farm is situated on the banks of Pienaars River and the original homestead was located just above the floodplain. Marks later erected a dwelling further north of the original. After the completion of the main house, the original dwelling was demolished and later became a site for most farming and production activities. It is also here where the dairy cottage and stable were erected. Pienaars River was a continuous means of water supply as it runs through the Zwartkoppies farm which added to its agricultural and economic value. Marks believed that this property was suitably located as its acquisition coincided with Paul Kruger's investigation of the possibilities of utilising a shorter railway route to export materials from Transvaal and importing from other places. Marks also used eighteen acres for farming which produced two profitable crops yearly. The creation of this landscape was also motivated by the alleged enthusiasm to conserve the once abundant South African wildlife which Marks shared with Paul Kruger and their Transvaal elite circle (Mendelsohn, 1991: 41).

For Sammy Marks, Zwartkoppies was more than simply an outlet for generous and expressive instincts, more so than simply an arena for cementing useful political connections. Zwartkoppies was a major focus for Marks's abounding creative energies, as well as a source of great personal delight and pleasure (Mendelsohn, 1991: 41).

Marks died at the Lady Dudley Nursing Home on 18 February 1920 at the age of 75 years as a result of a stomach ailment. Subsequent to Sammy Marks's death in 1920, his wife Bertha and some of their children used the house at Zwartkoppies farm occasionally until her death in 1934. Joe lived here with his family till his death in 1975, and then his widow Kirsty remained up to 1977 (Mendelsohn, 1991: 255). In his will Marks left the house to his great-great grandchildren with a clause instructing that nothing should be removed. However, his grandchildren managed to overturn part of the will which enabled the government to purchase the contents of the house in 1994 (Noomé, 2006: 87).

THE SAMMY MARKS MUSEUM

After the death of Joe's widow, it was clear that none of the family members had any desire of living in the Zwartkoppies house; thus ensued a search for a tenant. The main house was first offered to the Jewish community in Pretoria to use as an old-age home or a school. When that did not succeed, the offer was put forward to the army to use as a convalescent home. Finally to a hotel group, but the proposal was still not taken up. At this point the structure was dilapidating and an ideal tenant came forward. It was in 1980 when the Cultural History and Open-air Museum in Pretoria contacted the Marks Trust and proposed to purchase forty hectares of the Zwartkoppies farmland for the use of an open-air museum. This suggestion was .however, not accepted entirely as the eldest grandson of Sammy Marks, Neil Maisels proposed that instead the

Cultural History and Open-air Museum lease the property and buy its contents (Mendelsohn, 1991: 255).

The Trustees of the Estate of Sammy Marks Museum proposed to sell the contents of the Cultural History and Open-air Museum in 1982⁵⁴. The house was inventoried in 1984 to which the conservation process followed (Du-Plesis Pye, 2016: 19). In 1986 the Sammy Marks Museum was officially opened as one of its components. Thenceforward the museum went on a rigorous fundraising project towards the restoration of the site to its original state⁵⁵. The Sammy Marks Museum, its outbuildings and the other heritage structures thereon situated on the portion of the farm currently under Ditsong Museums of South Africa was declared a provincial heritage site in 1989⁵⁶. Flagship Institutes consisting of the Northern Flagship and Southern Flagships were established under Section 6 of the Cultural Institutions Act no. 119 of 1999. The National Cultural History Museum became part of the Northern Flagship Institute (NFI) which meant that the Sammy Marks Museum was now also part of the NFI. In 2010 the Northern Flagship changed its name to DITSONG Museums of South Africa.

REPRESENTATION IN MUSEUMS

Although earlier museums were founded to be public, they catered for the elite and the sophisticated who either visited museums to appreciate art or admire the peculiar and exotic cultures. These museums in essence were exclusive, therefore not entirely public. The museum positioned itself as having greater authority over the people whose cultures were being displayed by representing these cultures through the eyes of the West whereby what was different from

⁵⁴ A fundraising letter housed at the DITSONG National Museum of Cultural History Archives dated 27/01/1987 addressed to Mr R.D. Burgess, Assistant Marketing Manager of Allied Building Society.

⁵⁵ A fundraising letter housed at the DITSONG National Museum of Cultural History Archives dated 08/07/1987 addressed to Mr N. Wheeler, Group public manager of Concor Construction Pty Ltd.

⁵⁶ SAHRA website, the declaration was gazetted on, Friday, 10 March 1989, declaration type: provincial heritage site. <https://sahris.sahra.org.za/node/33666>.

“Self” was regarded as peculiar or strange. The museum was therefore to a greater extent contributing to the racial and societal class divisions (Loukaitou-Sideris & Grodach, 2004: 52). It is for those reasons that there has in recent years been a question on whether museums are still necessary to exist or not. Feest (1993: 88-89) argues that for museums to remain relevant, especially ethnographic museums, it is important to move away from their initial inceptions of existing in themselves as historical artefacts depicting other cultures which as a result has somewhat posed limitations to their existence.

Museums by nature have been known to arouse curiosity but are moving towards arousing doubt by giving visitors an opportunity to question what is being displayed and evidence to substantiate it (Durrans, 1992: 12). In *The Museum in Coloured Lights*, upon Shadia’s visit to the museum she experienced a cold and old Africa, the one she did not recognise, the Africa that she could not connect to what she left at home. Shadia’s encounter with the museum emphasise that those with power present and represented those with less power in any way they see fit. A letter from an employee to his employer in 1762 did not resonate with Shadia or her home Sudan. In fact it made her feel even more out of place, and the petroleum blue carpet which defined the elite nature of the museum space she was in’ also did not make her feel any better (Aboulelah, 1997: 15-16).

Although museums are entrenched in the history of colonialism, they are undergoing a radical change in the way they represent communities linked to the collection they preserve (Simpson, 1996: 1). Over the past forty years or so, there has been a tremendous blossoming of cultural expression and civil rights. The decades since the Second World War have been years of upheaval and change in the relationship between European nations and those that they had dominated and exploited during the colonial era. The trend was particularly significant in North America where groups which previously had felt

unrecognised, undervalued, or disadvantaged as a result of ethnicity, age, gender or sexual preference began vocalising their frustrations, promoting their strengths, and demanding their rights. The 1950's and 1960's witnessed civil rights disturbances across North America with demonstration of minority groups fighting against inequality and racism. In the United States, this period saw the emergence of the 'black' civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King. Other militant black power groups such as the Black Panther also came into being. These groups fought for improved social and political rights of African American citizens (Simpson, 1996:7).

The last three decades have seen an offshoot in groups that have previously been marginalised, installing institutions that are ethnic and culture specific to give a voice to their previously muted histories. This response has been as a result of the museum being perceived to still be driving a narrow narrative, and the establishment of these museums aims at making visible the identities and claiming citizenship in a diversified society (Simpson, 1996: 50-51). The offshoot of museums in the 19th and 20th centuries by Latin Americans, African Americans and parts of Africa such as the Apartheid Museum was due to the need to tell the stories from the perspective of the custodians, given that the indigenous people were often displayed alongside animals or aspects of nature. These types of museums emerged as a form of national pride and reclaiming of the marginalised peoples' identity and moving away from Western narratives (Stanish, 2008: 148).

The recent criticisms of museums emanated from their concealing of oppressions of cultures they are supposed to be representing and through the distortion of the truth wherein which it is not revealed to the public how objects were acquired or that there is in fact misrepresentation of cultures in exhibitions. Although the point of defence for museums could be that each exhibit serves a specific purpose and message, thus bound to somewhat be

subjective, Durrans (1992: 12) highlights that it is important to examine the justification of a particular representation in relation to who has the power to represent whom.

Museums have shifted from merely being repositories of collections into populists' places of entertainment (Durrans, 1992: 12). However, they experience great challenges in their representation of the diversified societies and their conventional methods of representation also face scrutiny as they are not doing justice to a transformed society today. Museums aim to provide an experience through works of art and artefacts which are more often than not the opposite of what their makers intended. Vogel argues that museums give the public false illusion by assuming a position of higher authority to that of an artist thus somewhat assumes the position of an imposed mediator. She advances that museums in their exhibitions need to clearly illustrate the part and intention of the artist and the interpretation of the curator. It is for that reason that museum professionals should at all times be cognisant about what they do and why they do it. It should also be mandatory that they conscientise the public that "what it sees is not material that speaks for itself, but material filtered through the tastes, interests, politics, and state of knowledge of particular presenters at a particular moment in time" (2003: 661).

To a greater extent, museums operate as monuments responsible for the fragility of cultures, to the fall of sustaining institutions and noble houses and contribute greatly to the collapse of rituals and the evacuation of myths. By and large academic disciplines have acknowledged the multiple values and meanings embedded in objects, their embodiment of relationships, histories, memories and identities. However, this concept of multiple meanings and resonances of objects is often an abstract one. It is something to be imagined and not necessarily experienced (Greenblatt, 1991: 43-44):

Cultural institutions and museums struggle with remaining relevant due to the continued focus to technical questions and solutions on conservation and the neglect of thorough engagement with the social and political concerns surrounding the objects that conservators are called to preserve. It is vital that conservation begin to recognise the continuously disregarded hands, voices, perspectives, histories and legacies:

Conservators and museum professionals need to move from the notion of preserving for future generations through asking the following questions: To whom do the collections and sites belong to? Whose objects are being conserved? Do these sites and collections “belong to the institutions and individuals who had the political, economic and lawful means to collect them, or do they also belong to the original makers and users (Balachandran: 2016)?”

Many people are intensely interested in understanding the past, the lives of their older living relatives and ancestors and their ethnic, social or political past and their individual lives at earlier moments. Interpreters of the past develop stories or narratives that they deem to be meaningful and leave out that which they find un-enlightening. “Each type of narrative mode reflects a different take on past experience” (Ruffins, 1992: 510- 512).

Sammy Marks is what it is, it is as you see it...It represents the kingdom of the white people and we should just leave it as is. What that place needs now is a coffee shop or restaurant that will serve white food like milk tart, apple tart and other white food so the place can make money. White people come here to enjoy the legacy of their king, let them be (Anonymous employee 1).

IDENTITY AND CITIZENSHIP IN MUSEUMS

Museums should be less concerned with the narratives and labels in exhibits or interpreting cultures but rather the feedback from visitors whose participation continuously reconstruct and remake cultural representations. The movement in being more inclusive will position museums as institutions of never ending narratives (Bean, 1994: 890; Durrans, 1992: 12).

The control of a museum translates precisely to controlling the representation of a community and its highest values and truths, therefore those who are most able to respond to its various prompts are “also those whose identities (social, sexual, racial, etc.) the museum ritual most fully confirms” (Duncan, 1995: 8). For the society to feel that they are part of a museum it needs to be afforded the opportunity to participate in representing itself. In transforming and remaining relevant, museums should move away from the highest authority attitude to being a space of discourse and multi-identity representation. The documentation and interpretation of alternative forms and decontextualization of the past will ensure that no ideology is safe from scrutiny and refutation (Durrans, 1992: 13).

Museums are increasingly becoming part and parcel of the broader society in one form or another therefore, necessitating a critical questioning of the social processes of how cultural representations are constructed along with their political and ideological infrastructure (Bean, 1994: 886-887). In Aboulelah (1997: 17) Shadia struggles with belonging in a space supposedly meant to represent her because instead of seeing herself through the objects all that is displayed is objects from a defeated Africa which reflects the imperialists’ heroism. While Shadia struggles with belonging and finding space in a foreign country, she is in the very country that represents her people as being weak and having been conquered. Yet she finds herself in a colonialist’s country so to reach the same level as the Western and this translates to what Fanon (1963)

describes as "white civilization and European culture having forced an existential deviation on the Negro". Museums globally are increasingly evolving in their complexion and pluralism in that groups that have previously been marginalised, no longer accept that status, but claiming their rightful space in these museums (Gaither, 1989: 56). In South Africa, the Freedom Park has been positioned as responding to the narratives of freedom, identity and belonging through a multiculturalism discourse central to the "new" South Africa (Matsipa, 2006: 59). African American people for instance have moved towards commemorating their history and culture through the establishment of museums. In a recent trip to the United States of America on a civil rights movement trail excursion, I got to observe this increasing sense of belonging in the African American museums whereby communities are representing themselves as opposed to what was the case in the past.

‘SERVANTS’ OF THE DITSONG SAMMY MARKS MUSEUM

“I am talking of millions of men who have been skilfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement” (Césaire. 1950).

The following interviews were conducted with participants who have been working for Sammy Marks since it was declared a museum. These interviews were conducted with former and current employees of the Sammy Marks Museum whom I also refer to as ‘servants’. ‘Servants’ who opted to remain anonymous cited fear of being victimised; so did those who abstained from being interviewed. Same as ‘servants’ of the Marks family in chapter 4, accounts of these ‘servants’ are translated verbatim.

I started working here in early 1980s. We worked very hard to fix that place (Sammy Marks). We scrubbed dog poo on the floor and cleaned the furniture... If I did not die from respiratory problems then as a result of dust and dog coat fur in that house then I would not die from respiratory

issues. We called the curator *misis*⁵⁷. Every time she appeared we would stop whatever we were doing and stand up even if we were on lunch. I could tell she enjoyed seeing us being fearful of her...I wanted to show my colleague just how beautiful the Sammy Marks house was after all the cleaning we did. I did so during a Cultural History Museum Christmas party that was held at the site. During this time the house was already open to the public. When we got to the entrance of the house we were told that black people are not allowed in the house. I was hurt. This is all I'm prepared to talk to you about, there is a lot more I can say, but it hurts and people will get into trouble. We can't fight because we are damaged, apartheid damaged us...Sammy Marks Museum is what it is, it is as you see it...It represents the kingdom of the white people and we should just leave it as is. What that place needs now is a coffee shop or restaurant that will serve white food like milk tart, and other food for white people and coffee so the place can make money. White people come here to enjoy the legacy of their king, let them be (Anonymous employee 1).

“It was in April 1984 when we moved from Willem Prinsloo to Sammy Marks house to fix the house. The old wooden floor was in a bad condition, the floor is not made of cement so we had to fix it”. (Stephen Motshwene)

I started working here in 2010. This is a great place, I love it. I wouldn't want anything to change about Sammy Marks Museum. The narrative and everything should remain as is (Dineo Maloka).

I started working at the Sammy Marks Museum in 2010. The place is good to work for, especially if you love history and business in South Africa. It is a nice place to work at. It can be intimidating especially as a

⁵⁷ 'Misis' is a word often used by black people to refer to Mistress by many people who worked or still work as domestics for white people.

black person. It has its own challenges. For example, the fact that we were not remunerated for overtime of work done over weekend but given time off which was not the case with other sites under DITSONG Museums of South Africa. We inquired on why that was and were told that because the museum is closed to the public on Monday we were technically not on duty even though we reported for work. Other issues are when white customers do not want a black tour guide so there were and are racial issues, not all the time though. A lot of times we are judged according to our skin colour. You always have to go an extra mile to prove that you are indeed qualified for the job and have done your research on Sammy Marks. I knew my story and did my job with confidence...I had the same problem at Pioneer Museum before I worked for Sammy Marks whereby a white teacher visiting the museum felt that they cannot have a African person wearing Afrikaners cultural clothes and giving a tour. Immediately one of my white colleagues, Caroline intervened and asked the teacher to give me a chance...Most of the visitors are Afrikaners and other people who come from abroad. There are always signs of rivalry between the English and the Afrikaners in that, Afrikaners visitors will indicate that they do not want to hear about the English. The same will go for the English. In Sammy Mark's biography, Sammy Marks refers to black people as kaffir and you get visitors who want to know about the kind of a person Sammy Marks was. Do you know that as guides we are not allowed to deviate from the script? There's a lot that can be changed if people come together. There's a perception of how Sammy Marks should be. We are driven by what the client want and not by our vision of striving to be inclusive (Nthabiseng Mokoena).

I started working here in 2013. I would say the experience has been bitter sweet. It is sweet in that, I'm doing what I love. I am a historian and guide so I enjoy all types of histories irrespective of race or period. The bitter side of it is we are undervalued and treated as though we are useless. We are being told that we need to upgrade ourselves into better career paths as guided has no value. At least some clients see us. The narrative here is carefully managed. It has been crafted to glorify the coloniser and silencing black people. A black person is useless here. People of high intellect, especially international visitors at times ask us as black people to give our honest opinion about Sammy Marks. He was super arrogant and undermining the poor black people. He was a complex man. How he treated the Jews was opposite to his treatment of black people. This place needs to be opened up because there's a lot that is hidden. It is an elephant that needs to be opened up. I have a problem with providing untruthful information. The clientele here is mainly Afrikaners. They are concerned with protecting their legacy. When black visitors come, it is learners from black middle class through school excursions. History must be realigned. Some schools have stopped coming to the museum and have indicated that the site is not transformed, it is static. We often notice the disappointment in white visitors when they find out that a tour will be conducted by a black person. If we are lucky a black visitor would come here once in five months (Abraham Mogale).

I started working here in early 2000s. Each time a black person visits the museum there are suspicions that they want to steal. The English and the Afrikaners visit the museum. Black people are not allowed to host weddings here, only whites. We are just not treated the same. In future I would like to see the staff comprising of all South African races then maybe change will come (Anonymous 2).

Boswell (2014) emphasises that aversive racism is rooted in spaces which are still defined and regarded as ‘white’ or catering to a ‘white market’, the Sammy Marks Museum falling within those categories. Black people “obtain differential ‘access’ to these ‘white’ spaces and are forced to ‘adjust’ self to achieve belonging, respect and statuses”.

DECOLONISATION OF THE DITSONG SAMMY MARKS MUSEUM

Irrespective of form or shape that decolonisation occurs, it somewhat involves a form of violence. “Be it of spaces, education, religion or cultures”. It is so because the process of decolonizing entails a “certain species of men by another species of men” without allowing a period of transition. One of the unusual traits of decolonisation is that the colonised demands are always minimal in comparison to the effect of being colonised (Fanon, 1963: 1-2).

When a people has no choice but how it will die; when a people has received from its oppressors only the gift of despair, what does it have to lose? A people’s misfortune will become its courage; it will make, of its endless rejection by colonialism, the absolute rejection of colonization. (Sartre, 1957: xxix)

Any effort of decolonisation which has a chance of bringing about change is bound to create some form of disorder as it disturbs the status quo. Decolonisation is a much needed change “in the consciousness and in the lives of the men and women who were once colonised”. This possible terrifying change is equally experienced “in the consciousness of another species of men and women, the colonisers”. Decolonisation never takes place unnoticed, for it influences individuals fundamentally (Fanon, 2008: 1-2).

Much of the work of managing the difficult pasts of nations has been performed by what have been called ‘new museums,’ and especially new national museums. Among the best-known examples are the German Historical

Museum, the Canadian Museum of Civilization, the Smithsonian's National Museum of the African American History and Culture. Most of these were founded in the 1990s and the 2000s in an effort to transform and decolonise African American museums in the contemporary provide visible evidence of African American history and culture and depict how they take pride in their heritage and culture. In these 'new museums' they have the liberty to communicate that through their own voices rather than being represented by white historians and curators (Attwood, 2013: 47). The Museum of Mississippi History and Mississippi Civil Right Museum, Smithsonian Museum of African American History and Culture are some of the museums where the African American voice is heard through its own people.

In his talk titled *Decolonising Knowledge and the Question of the Archive* (2015) political theorist and philosopher Professor Achille Mbembe stated that, in the eyes of many, whites are 'settlers' who, once in a while, will attempt to masquerade as 'natives'. He further postulates that due to our South African democracy and constitutional State, all are citizens and there are no longer 'settlers' and 'natives'. Fellow white citizens might be fencing off their privileges, enclaving and even off-shoring them; but what is for certain, is they are going nowhere. That said, they "cannot keep living in our midst with whiteness' old clothes". This 'old whiteness' that Mbembe alludes to is the reality of the Sammy Marks Museum, Melrose House and others alike which persist on protecting colonial and apartheid legacies in a democracy. Any institution with a genuine commitment to community service and the pursuit of social justice issues will make the inclusion and participation of stakeholders in its museum programs a moral obligation, which is not the case with Sammy Marks Museum (Robinson, 2017: 860). A decolonised Sammy Marks Museum is one that would embody and perform the central objectives, values and mission of the DITSONG Museums of South Africa in terms of acknowledging

diversity, foregrounding minority experiences, encouraging dialogue across different communities, and functioning as a democratic platform for the discussion and contestation of the ugly and painful historical narrative of the British colonisation and apartheid South Africa. Therefore, fulfilling the mission of being inclusive, relevant and accessible to all.

I am by no means here proposing an architectural or structural change of the site but rather, that the Sammy Marks Museum should mirror the public space that it is supposed to be. I put forward that in transforming for a start, the narrative in exhibitions should echo all histories that took place on this site. Decolonisation of this site would entail a shift from hosting and inviting same upper and middle class schools that visit the museum every year, but extending to other under privileged schools in and around Tshwane. This shift will contribute to the reversal of effects of the cultural displacement brought about by colonialism and apartheid, thus working towards eradication of the struggle for social freedom (Marzagora, 2016: 161). Engagement with local communities such as Mamelodi which is a stone away from the site should be a good point of departure. By inviting and including the previously marginalised voices to form part and contribute to the development of the transformed narrative and other activities of the museum would position the museum as attractive to a new and wider audience. Du-Plessis Pye (2016) describes the Sammy Marks House now a museum as one of the “grand houses, along with Barton Keep, Melrose House and Merton Keep” which have been preserved to maintain their various degrees of authenticity and “serve as a testament to the domestic cultural history of a bygone era”. It was especially because of sentiments such as those held by Du-Plessis Pye that the installation of South African heritage sites post-apartheid sought to break the authoritarian past and a linear narrative, thus locating the institutions of the new South Africa on relics of the old (King & Flynn, 2012: 69). While Du-Plessis (2016) praises the preserved structural authenticity of the

Sammy Marks Museum and sites alike, I contend that this ‘authentic’ colonial structure also serves as a reminder and perpetuator of racial segregation. The Sammy Marks house in Zwartkoppies farm has been designed to emulate the Victorian and Edwardian styles for the purpose of bringing Britain to South Africa (Mendelsohn, 1991: 37). The reinterpretation of the site will move the site towards neutralising the divisions and silences. DITSONG Museums of South Africa’s mission is: “To acquire and preserve, research, exhibit and display heritage assets, and educate the public on cultural, military and natural heritage in a sustainable and transformational manner”. It is through the decolonisation of the Sammy Marks Museum among other sites that DMSA can realise its mission in totality.

CONCLUSION

The decision to interview ‘servants’ who have been working at the Sammy Marks Museum since it was declared a museum, was so as to gauge whether or not the site has transformed. It became clear after the interview process with the former and current Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum ‘servants’, that this site still is drenched in elements of racism and the resistance to transform. Although there has been power exchange politically, in other respects of the South African society, power relations remain relatively the same. The Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum forms part of spaces where there has not been a power shift. In South Africa, the past has not past but remain to linger to feed the unequal society that South Africa is. Despite being declared a museum in 1986 which translated in it being a public space, the Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum is in discord with the type of post-colonial and post-apartheid museum Nelson Mandela envisaged and invited the South African society to embrace. In his speech on 24 September 1997, Nelson Mandela asserted that:

During colonial and apartheid times, our museums and monuments reflected the experiences and political ideals of a minority to the exclusion of others...a handful - three per cent - represented the kind of heritage which glorified mainly white and colonial history...the small glimpse of black history in the others was largely fixed in the grip of racist and other stereotypes. Having excluded and marginalised most of our people, is it surprising that our museums and national monuments are often seen as alien spaces? Our cultural institutions cannot stand apart from our Constitution and our Bill of Rights. Within the context of our fight for a democratic South Africa and the entrenchment of Human Rights, can we afford exhibitions in our museums depicting any of our people as lesser human beings? Such degrading forms of representation inhibit our children's appreciation of the value and strength of our democracy, of tolerance and of human rights. With democracy, we have the opportunity to ensure that our institutions reflect history in a way that respects the heritage of all our citizens. Our museums and the heritage sector as a whole are being restructured. Community consultation...and accessibility are our guiding principles as we seek to redress the imbalances. When our museums and monuments preserve the whole of our diverse heritage, when they are inviting to the public and interact with the changes all around them, then they will strengthen our attachment to human rights, mutual respect and democracy, and help prevent these ever again being violated⁵⁸.

Twenty six years after democracy racism and segregation are still flourishing at the Ditsong Sammy Marks Museum on the fertile colonial Zwartkoppies farm. It cannot be that today some histories are elevated over others or muted on basis

⁵⁸ This was in an address by President Mandela on Heritage Day in Robben Island, 24 September 1997 <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/address-president-mandela-heritage-day-robben-island-24-september-1997>

of race. It cannot be that black workers in a national museum are being instructed not to include black history as that would “chase visitors away”.

Uhuru⁵⁹ is yet to be attained, thus, “there is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write”⁶⁰, we decolonise.

⁵⁹ Uhuru means freedom in Swahili.

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