OTHER PORTRAITS: MIMESIS REVISITED THROUGH PRODUCTIVE METHEXIS

AS PORTRAYED IN SELECTED SOUTH-AFRICAN PORTRAITURE POST-1994

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Philosophiae Doctor (Visual Studies)

in the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
PRETORIA

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August 2016

DECLARATION

I declare that:

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is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SUMMARY AND KEY TERMS

This study aims to investigate the changing ontological nature of the portrait from mimesis to methexis in relation to South African portraiture. It proposes that the representational nature of traditional portraiture changes in response to the social and political climate. The early phases of the Western mimetic portrait are marked by the desire to capture and maintain the subject's presence. This will-to-presence is facilitated by the development of a socio-economic milieu of individualism. The Renaissance emphasis, on the human being as individual through humanist philosophy, the legal system and mirror technologies intensified the individual's desire to become and remain present in the portrait. This study proposes that the portrait becomes the location of the metaphysics of presence, offering the promise of life after the subject's physical demise. The metaphysics of presence in the portrait gained a political dimension when the sitter's likeness was portrayed through the ideological lens of colonialism. The portrait became a strategy of what Mirzoeff (2001:7) refers to as 'visuality'. Visuality is a form of biopower that establishes and maintains power over the portrayed. During apartheid, iconic categorisation resulted in the classification and segregation of different "races". The study proposes that the politics of presence is founded on mimetic representational strategies. It argues that during the close of apartheid, mimetology was identified as an apparatus of colonisation.

The mimetic process however, is laced with pitfalls. It creates the illusion of sameness whereas in reality, it only produces difference. Derrida and Lacoue-Labarthe point out that what is produced by mimesis is not a copy, but an entirely in its own right. The hope created by mimesis fades in the face of poststructuralist ideas. The notion of Platonic mimetic is revisited by Gadamer. He identifies mimesis as part of methexis. This provides hope yet again, not of innocent representation (*adequatio*), but of a presentation (*Darstellung*) through mediation and play. This study proposes that revisiting the linear representational process of mimesis, through Gadamer's notion of methexis, results in the idea of participation. The democratic participation of the subject in his or her self(ie) portrayal is facilitated by contemporary smartphone technology. This technology facilitates the participation in the iconic categorisation of

the past and enable the rewriting of historical repressive portraits. Aesthetic participation includes devices such as appropriation. Methexis is therefore identified as descriptive of the ontological nature of self(ie) presentations.

Key terms

Anti-mimetology; likeness; mimesis; metaphysics; methexis; Other; poiesis; productive methexis; portraiture; presence; presentation; representation; selfie; visual hermeneutics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the University of Pretoria for the financial assistance that they have provided me. This study would not have been possible without this.

To my supervisor, Prof Amanda du Preez, thank you for your invaluable feedback and guidance.

I would like to thank Bruno Stella for his patient support, for advice on language and grammar and for editing this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and background information

The art of portraiture has the uncanny ability to deface itself as a sign. The materiality of the portrait becomes 'transparent' when the illusion is created that one is looking at a 'real' person (Brilliant 2002:7) instead of an object. Richard Brilliant (2002:7) points out that the ontological nature of the portrait depends on its existence as representation. In other words, the portrait would cease to be a portrait if it did not conjure up the presence of its human-original.[1] In this regard, Gadamer (2007:295) states that "[c]learly the most distinctive element of a portrait is its intention to be recognised as such". This study wishes to investigate the ontological relationship between portrait and the semblance of presence it creates. The relationship of resemblance between portrait and sitter is created by the "transparent visual rhetoric" of mimesis (Woodall 1997:5).[2] The perceived transparency of the medium allows for the sitter's presence to manifest. Mimetic transparency creates the illusion that the sitter faces the viewer in the present, especially when the sitter's essential aspect is faithfully portrayed. Although it seems like it, the viewer is obviously not contemplating the person itself, but his or her *appearance* or likeness. Plato passionately rejected mimesis in the *Republic* (375 BC), due to its association with the notion of appearance. According to Plato, the 'apparition' that appears through mimesis does not represent the real truth (*alētheia*), but only a superficial truth or *adequatio* (Plato 1979:426). The portrait image in Plato's (1979:426) mind, is synonymous with a ghostlike reflection. It is a false spectre. In his 'Simile of the cave' (1979:321), Plato (1979:426) alludes to the notion of artistic imitation as a shadow of a shadow. Art has a lowly status because it is "a mere phenomenal appearance" (Plato 1979:426). Plato's (1979:429) contempt for the representational artist is palpable in

[1] Portraiture's traditional ontological status as representational is discussed by several authors: Richard Brilliant (2002:7) refers to the intended relationship between portrait and 'original'; Ernst Van Alphen (1997:239) discusses the referentiality of traditional portraiture that attempted to capture the 'interior essence' of the subject. Cynthia Freeland (2007:98) reiterates that the subject is believed to be residing 'in' the traditional portrait.

[2] Mimesis here is used in the traditional Platonic sense, as a 'literal imitation' of an original (Plato 1979:421) and includes Erich Auerbach's (1974:554) interpretation of mimesis as "the interpretation of reality through literary representations or 'imitation'".

his description of "[t]he artist who makes a likeness of a thing knows nothing about the reality but only about the appearance". Mimetic imitation such as portraiture thus dabbles in superficial appearances instead of the permanent realm of essences. Representation is thus regarded as having a secondary and inferior ontological value. In contrast, 'reality' consists of transcendental essences and is metaphysical in nature. White (1993:vii) refers to Plato as the "original metaphysician" and the first philosopher to refer to non-corporeal phenomena or the Forms (*eide*). This study discusses the mimetic ontological nature of the portrait, and identifies mimesis as the axis around which notions of world, sign and self revolve (Schweiker 1990:189). It is argued that in the early stages of portraiture, the human being has an almost a compulsive desire to capture his or her complete presence in the portrait. This desire forms part of a *Weltanschauung* characterised by *the* epistémé, which is Western philosophy. Western philosophy itself is founded on the notion of the metaphysics of presence. As mentioned earlier, in order for presence to manifest in the portrait the belief in the integrity of the sign has to be sustained. Presence – "*eidos, archē, télos, energeia, ousia*" (Derrida 1997b:279-279) is maintained by the structural unity of the sign. The structural coherence of the portrait representation is evident when the portrait is believed to point to its referent.

Ernst Van Alphen (1997:240) argues that "no pictorial genre depends as much on mimetic referentiality as the traditional portrait, it becomes the emblem of that conception". Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (1998:8) refers to the sitter's mimetic doubling in the portrait as the "metaphysical onto-mimetology". Metaphysical onto-mimetology is the obsession that compels the subject to recreate itself. The sitter cannot be fully represented in the portrait through mimesis though, because mimesis *re*-presents the sitter. Mimesis does not create a copy, but different production entirely. In this regard, Jacques Derrida (1981b:9) states that:

> Mimesis here is not the representation of one thing by another, the relation of resemblance or of identification between two beings, the reproduction of a product of nature by a product of art. It is not the relation of two products but of two productions. And of two freedoms. [...]. 'True' mimesis is between two producing subjects and not between two produced things.

The representational process therefore, inadvertently Otherises the sitter instead of creating full presence (mimetic sameness). Due to the impossibility of mimesis, it is proposed that a reappraisal of the notion of mimesis leads to the notion of productive

methexis. Productive methexis arguably liberates the portrait as well as the sitter from the confines of mimetic representation. It is argued in Chapter Three that traditional mimesis results in the subjugation of the portrait-sitter. The sitter become a *mimos* or a shallow reflection of the portrait, which pre-exists the subject. The traditional portrait also ties the sitter into a static representational relationship. This is especially true of colonial portrayals that sought to arrest its sitters' presence.[3] This study argues that *poiesis* instead of mimesis creates the freedom of both portrait and portrayed. *Poiesis* can be defined as the imitation of the manufacturing process of nature (Derrida 1981b:9). In contrast, mimesis attempts to imitate nature itself (Derrida 1981b:9) Lacoue-Labarthe (1989:255-256) refers to this process as "productive-mimesis", because it imitates "*phusis* [or nature] as a productive force or as a *poiesis*".[4] Hence, what it produces was not already present in nature (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989:257). This type of portrait does not imitate its sitter, but arguably produces him or her through the representation.

The notion of production is also present in Gadamer's (2006:476) notion of methexis, which produces what was not already present. Methexis, or re-presentation (*Darstellung*) (Gadamer 2007:310) bridges the gap opened up by mimesis. Aristotle noticed that Plato substituted the term mimesis for methexis; a substitution that does not have mere cosmetic implications, but significantly changes its fundamental meaning (Gadamer 2007:310). Unlike mimesis, methexis refers to 'participation' (*Teilhabe*). Therefore, instead of merely being a ghostly reflection, appearance actively *participates* in the Platonic Forms. Methexist participation entails that the copy shares in the essential character of the Forms (*eide*), and vice versa. Methexis therefore abolishes differential boundaries, such as those between the Self and the Other, sitter and portrait. As Gadamer (2007:312) points out, Plato uses mimesis to refer to imitation, but changes its definition in the *Sophist* (360 BC) into methexis. The Sophist was written 20 years after the *Republic* and it could be argued that Plato revisited the earlier definition with time. Plato's later interpretation of mimesis

[3] Colonial portrayals are often repressive in nature because it attempts to confine the sitter's 'essence' to a predetermined ideological pictorial convention. This type of portraiture is not an 'authentic' portrait of the sitter, but is characterised by a politics of likeness. The politics of likeness is discussed in Chapter Three.

[4] Lacoue-Labarthe (1989:255) distinguishes between two types of mimesis that derive from Aristotle's text. The first type of mimesis is imitative of nature and includes the "reproduction, the copy, the reduplication of what is given...". The second type of mimesis "reproduces nothing [...] but which *supplements* a certain deficiency in nature [...] *produces* everything" (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989:255).

although initially in flux, refers to the notion of participation. According to Gadamer (2007:341), "[t]hat appearance participates in ideas remains the presupposition which lies beneath the hypothesis of the ideas". Plato's theory of mimesis should thus not be viewed as monolithic and referring to only *imitatio*. It includes the idea of the participation of appearances in ideas. This reading of mimesis as methexis questions the reality/copy dyad and liberates the portrait from being a mere imitation. It is however, the sitter who needs to be liberated from being a *mimos* (an imitator) of the portrait. Here, Derrida's (1981b:9) notion of 'two productions' in thinking about methexis becomes useful. The subject does not slavishly imitate the portrait and the portrait is not an empty spectre, or a hauntology, of the subject. Derrida coined the term hauntology (1994[sp]) as a homonymic replacement for ontology (Davis 2005:373). Replacing 'ontology' with 'hauntology' signifies the supplanting of the desire for presence with that of a ghost. Neither of the two terms are entirely present or absent.

Based on the discussion above, this study sets out to trace the logic of the changing status of mimesis as the basis for South African portraiture. In order to fulfil this goal, the traditional mimetic portrait that is perceived to capture the presence of the subject is discussed. The subject's desire for presence in the portrait is traced through the discussion of seminal Western portraits. The reason for the focus on Western portraiture in Chapter Two is that the genre of mimetic portraiture is a colonial concept. Dutch and Flemish portraits were brought to South Africa in the early 20th century and are characteristic of European stylistic conventions (Proud 2016). The Western portraits selected for discussion in Chapter Two arguably exemplify the development of the notion of the individual's desire to be present in the portrait. The study traces the manner in which traditional portrait-presence is transformed into a political one, under the auspices of colonialism. Mimesis as an artistic strategy is rejected by selected artists post-1994 in a bid against the metaphysics of presence and the politics of likeness. Portraits that highlight the notions of 'identity' as well as 'race' as constructs are discussed. Selected portraits by Kendell Geers, Marlene Dumas, Pieter Hugo and Richardt Strydom are influential in this regard. It is finally argued that a methexist participation is evident in selected South African selfies. The digital format of the selfie is democratically accessed by the majority of South Africans, due to the availability and affordability of cell phone technologies. The selected selfies exemplify a participation of the subject in the

construction of his or her own image, contrary to traditional mimetic limitation. Methexis is not limited to South Africa, but is arguably intensified by engagements with colonialism and its aftermath. The above discussion can be divided into the following main ideas, which exemplify the main argumentative ideas of this study:

Portraiture and the metaphysics of presence: Onto-mimetology seeks to render the sitter present in the portrait, with the aim of remaining presence. It is argued in Chapter Two that the technologies of the portrait (*technē*) develop in conjunction with consciousness (*ousia*) in order to bring forth the sitter's presence. The aim of the traditional portrait is to bring forth the sitter's presence in the here-and-now. The ultimate aim of the portrait is to ensure the sitter's everlasting presence. The desire for this double presence is underpinned by the philosophical metaphysics of presence. The understanding of presence is arguably constructed by the convergence of legal, philosophical and economic forces during the Roman era (27BC-476 AD), and also the early Renaissance (late 13th-16th century), which reintroduced aspects of the Roman era. Chapter Two therefore investigates the perceived presence of the stable subject in the traditional portrait. A local example of the sitter's traditional mimetic presence is Sir William Nicholson's portrait of *Florence Phillips* (1910) (Figure 1). This portrait exemplifies traditional portraiture, since it arguably sets out to capture the full 'essential' presence of the sitter through her 'truthful' likeness, as she appears 'now'. It aims to provide insight into the South African art patroness' essential character and stature, via physiognomic features and likeness.[5]

[5] This view is echoed by Hurter (2005:13) who states that a successful portrait provides information about a person's inner being. The photographer aims to capture the sitter's essence, personality and likeness (Hurter 2005:13).

Figure 1**:** Sir William Nicholson, *Florence Phillips*, 1910.
Oil on canvas, 112 x 92 cm.
Johannesburg art gallery, Johannesburg.
(Grand Ladies 2011).

The personality of Dorothea Sarah Florence Alexandra Lady Phillips (1863-1940), wife of a well-to-do mining magnate, is arguably revealed in this portrait. Being the founder of the Johannesburg Art Gallery, her perception of herself as having refined taste is evident in this opulent Ingresque portrayal. The viewer perceives the affluent sitter as a sensual and social being, due to her choice of clothing and her coy pose. It is easy to transpose her portrait-presence to that of a dancing hall or an art gallery. One can imagine how she would effortlessly mingle with her patrons over a glass of fine wine. Her presence is arguably also captured with the idea of her future absence in mind. It will be argued in Chapter Two that the traditional portrait preserves the sitter's everlasting presence in the face of his or her future absence through death.

Mimetology underpins the ontological nature of the traditional portrait that aims to faithfully imitate the sitter's presence. Artistic styles such as naturalism and realism create the illusion that the sitter appears before the viewer, unmediated by the materiality of the medium. This illusion "makes us believe that the signifier and the signified form a unity" (Van Alphen 1997:241) and that the portrait "carries the referent within itself" (Barthes 1982:5).

Plato's theory of mimesis established the representational hierarchy of the

conventions of portraiture that aims to capture the sitter's presence.[6] The interpretation of mimesis-as-representation (*imitatio*) provides the portrait-copy with a secondary ontological status to that of its human original (Plato 1979:421). Mimesis, or pictorial representations (such as portraits) are vehemently rejected by Plato (1979:421), because they are shallow and "tell us nothing about life".[7] Plato's repudiation of the copy lies in the fact that "... the artist's representation stands at third remove from reality" (Plato 1979:425). Mimesis wants to bridge the gap between itself and the original by means of faithful imitation. This is also arguably true of the traditional portrait. The aim of the faithful portrait is to "completely coincides" with its sitter (Gadamer 2007:295). This is obviously impossible, because of the ontological divide between portrait-representation and its human sitter. The ontological divide is evident in *Portrait of a boy* (2005) (Figure 2), by Hanneke Benade (1972-) below. Even though the portrait is highly mimetic due to its 'extreme photographic realism', it fails to capture the subject completely since representation and human original can never coalesce to form a single body.[8] Instead, the representation remains static and one-dimensional, and the young boy has "already left the scene, leaving only a *trace*" to use the words of Nuyen (1994:429).

[6] Plato (1979:424-425) categorises the ontological nature of objects into three echelons: objects made by god; those made by a craftsperson, and those created by a painter.

[7] The term ‘mimesis’ originated in Plato’s *The Republic* (circa 375 BC) and inadvertently established the original/representation dualism because the corporeal is seen as imitative of the Forms or 'transcendent essences'.

[8] The editor (Plato 1979:421) uses the term 'extreme photographic realism' to refer to a style that already existed in the early fourth century.

Figure 2: Hanneke Benade, *Portrait of a boy*, 2005.
Pastel on paper, 29.50 x 20.50 cm.
Private collection.
(Blouin Art Sales Index 2013).

The artists discussed in Chapter Two such as Jan van Eyck, Albrecht Dürer, Rembrandt van Rijn as well as other adherents to the traditional portrait are arguably aware of this his absence created by imitation. The hope arguably still remains that the replication of oneself will ensure one's presence. The compulsive onto-mimetology is evident in the doubling of the self, warding off the threat of death (*thanatos*) by creating the illusion of the metaphysics of presence, in the portrait.

The politics of likeness discuss the further 'development' of the sitter's mimetic presence in the portrait. It is argued here, that metaphysical presence is transformed into a political one. Likeness (*Abbildung*), especially of the colonial subject, becomes a means of capturing racial 'essence'. This is made possible when political aspirations inevitably seep into the mimetic gap that exists in the imitative process. Mimetology entails that the appearance haunts (or chases) the original in the process of imitation. Because the mimetic copy only approximates the original and can never *become* the original, an 'unfortunate' gap is created which mimesis tries to wish away. This mimetic gap is infused with aspects that do not necessarily belong to the sitter, but which are retrospectively added to his or her 'essence'.

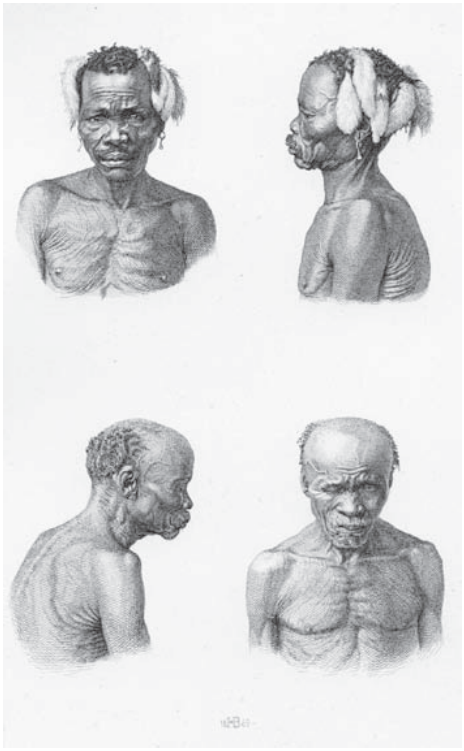

Figure 3: Gustav Theodor Fritsch, *Buschmänner*, 1872.
Lithograph.
(Bank & Dietrich 2008:140).

Anthropological portraits such as the ones above were captured by Gustav Theodor Fritsch (1838-1927) in his "Atlas of racial types" (Bank 2008:140). His taxonomy contributed to the establishment of the perceived notion of racial essence. Portraits such as these were abundantly available during the nineteenth century. For example, German eugenicist and anthropologist Eugene Fischer, studied the skulls of 'Herero' and 'Hottentot' people. He also studied the *Rehobother Bastards* (1938), of which the portrait of Hans Isaak (Figure 4) is an example. The aim of the photographic portraits seems to be to define racial presence through difference.

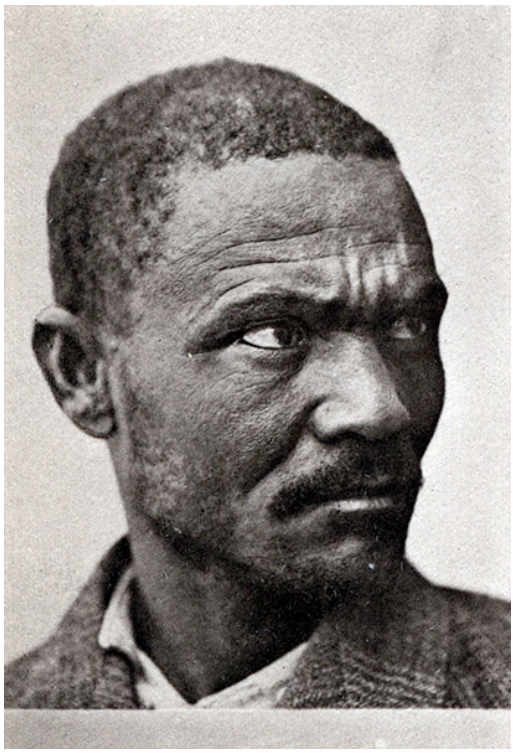

Figure 4: Eugene Fischer, *Die Rehobother Bastards, Hans Isaak*, 1913.
Photograph.
(Fischer 1913:36).

Fischer opposed racial mixing. Like French aristocrat Joseph Arthur Comte De Gobineau (1816-1882) (1853:204) and others before him, he wanted to keep the 'white' 'race' 'pure'. His 'mimetic' photographic portrayals produce the racial presence of the colonial sitter's 'essence'. Racial taxonomy arguably reached its zenith in South Africa in the various apartheid era Acts. Examples include the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (No 55) of 1949, amended in 1968 and 1985, the Population Registration Act of 1950 and the Immorality Act of 1957. These Acts arguably aimed to fix racial presence in the image of the state. Colonial depictions of the Other's presence are discussed in Chapter Three to show the trajectory of mimesis from its origins in the desire for 'pure' presence to that of a political presence. The anthropological portrayal of the Other penetrates superficial likeness by means of the epidermalisation (or internalisation) of colonial views (Fanon 2008:xiii). Epidermalisation entails that the Other not only mimics his or her devalued portrayal, but internalises it and produces him or herself accordingly. Epidermalisation thus refers to the mimicry of racial stereotypes that do not have actual referents in reality. These stereotypes are instead, produced by Western nationalistic sentiments.

Resistance to the politics of likeness argues that mimetic likeness is recognised as an apparatus of Otherisation by selected South African artists. Artists whose portraits are discussed in Chapter Four include Roger Ballen, Marlene Dumas, Anthea Pokroy, Pieter Hugo, Kendell Geers and Richardt Strydom. Chapter Four argues that these artists confront mimetology in rejection to the European representational tradition. They arguably reject the mimetic tradition that culminated in the colonial racial portrait taxonomy. The artistic and political aspirations of the post-1994 milieu resonate with those of poststructuralism. The destabilisation (or decentring) of authorial meaning arguably corresponds with the anti-mimetic strategies of the selected artists. The artists selected for discussion challenge the notion of metaphysical presence, inherent human 'essence' and stable artistic representation.[9] Anti-mimetology here becomes a political tactic in the resistance of the metanarrative of apartheid. The illusion of stable racial essence is arguably attributed to mimesis.

Non-mimetic portraits discussed in this section reject the representational pledge of mimesis. Mimesis "belongs to the so-called political register dominated by values of 'person', 'self', [and] even of the 'body' as referential identity" (Derrida 1995:163). Derrida (1989:8) deconstructs the "metaphysical onto-mimetology" of Plato, Hegel, Heidegger and Lacan. Onto-mimetology includes the notion of Being (Lacoue-Labarathe 1998), and in relation to portraiture, it would refer to the individual subject's essential characteristics. Derrida questions the presence of the sitter and shows that the idea of 'person' is marked by an inherent "structure of difference: half of it [is] always 'not there' and the other half always ‘not that'" (Derrida 1997a:xvii). This also becomes an important criticism of the traditional portrait that marks the sitter's absence as opposed to his or her presence.

The notion of the stable subject as origin of the portrait is another aspect of traditional portraiture rejected in Chapter Four. Derrida (1989:22) points out that the notion of origin (such as the sitter) is in effect not compatible with mimesis, since the very definition of mimesis involves play. Mimesis as play is operative "from the beginning" in the subject (Derrida 1989:29) and the subject can therefore not be regarded as the 'origin' of representation. Mimesis itself entails movement and

[9] Roland Barthes' (1978) [1968] essay "The death of the author" decentres the author as the 'father' of the text and the sole producer of a single (teleological) meaning. The authorial meaning closes the text and suppresses multiplicity of meanings that the text yield. The above practice becomes political when apartheid authorial 'meaning' or metanarrative is rejected in favour of the open and democratic practice of the reader as producer of meaning.

substitution, as Lacoue-Labarthe (1998:116) points out, and it is therefore incompatible with the notion of 'essence', which implies permanence and stability. Therefore, even realistic portraits only 'capture' the mimetic substitute of the sitter "not because of the identity between these two so-called components of the sign, but because of their relationship of difference" (Spivak 1997a:xvi). [10] In terms of portraiture, Brilliant (1987:171) implicitly addresses the idea of *différance* by highlighting the contentious nature of the idea of likeness. Brilliant (1987:171). highlights that likeness inevitably contains a degree of difference in order to be a likeness and not the thing itself. Mimesis therefore produces traces and works through various supplements that give way to *différance.*[11] For this reason, Gerard Richter (2002:4) refers to the sitter's "perpetual self-differentiation" in the portrait as opposed to his or her full presence. Richter (2002:4) asserts that the notion of the non-identical reveals both itself (identity) and its other (non-identity). They both contain traces of each other but can never be synthesised into sameness. Richter (2002:1) uses the term 'other-portrait' to refer to the manner in which the categories of subject and object are non-identical. The subject depicts itself as image (object) in this 'other-portrait' and meaning unfolds in the "multiple removal from the referent" (Richter 2002:1).

The gap between representation and referent is exploited by contemporary South African artists. Post-1994 inaugurated a critical interrogation of stable identity, and many South African artists addressed notions of identity arguably through poststructuralist and postmodernist tactics. For example, a year into democracy Minnette Vári altered her own 'white' body digitally into a 'black' body in *Self Portrait I* (1995) (Figure 6). Jean Brundrit used the idea of negative space in *Portrait of a lesbian couple in SA* (1995) (Figure 7) as a device to highlight the marginalisation and absence of alternative identities. Therefore, preciously stable national and personal identities become hybrid and less defined.

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[10] This study agrees with Lacoue-Labarthe's (1989:116) view that mimesis does not have a fixed nature but is rather characterised by the circular movement of substitutions and supplements. According to Derrida (1997a:159), there are only supplements, which are "substitutive significations which could only come forth in a chain of differential references, the 'real' supervening, and being added only while taking on meaning from a trace and from an invocation of the supplement…". In this regard Spivak (1997a:xvii) notes "[t]he structure of the sign is determined by the trace or track of that other which is forever absent. This other is of course never to be found in its full being".

[11] The term *différance* is coined by Derrida to simultaneously signify the notions of differing and deferring. The idea of differing "fissures and retards presence" (Derrida1973b:88). The trace, according to Derrida, yields *différance* (1997a:157).

Figure 5: Minnette Vári, *Self Portrait I*, 1995.
Digital print on vinyl, 120 x 60 cm.
(Williamson 1996:101).

Figure 6: Jean Brundrit, *Portrait of a lesbian couple in SA*, 1995.
Manipulated silver print.
(Bedford 1997:95).

Chapter Four discusses Kendell Geers' decentring of the faciality of the sitter by means of masking and camouflaging in *Portrait of the artist as a young man* (1993), which he appropriates in *Out of Africa* (1994). The latter work intensifies the idea of bodily absence. Geers' *Self-portrait* (1995) is an appropriation, which is re-

appropriated in *Mined* (2010) (Figure 45).[12] It is clear here how artistic appropriation has affinities with Derrida's notion of *différance* that defers meaning.

It will be argued that artists discussed in Chapter Four resist racial presence through artistic devices such as 'typing'. The apartheid metanarrative of racial taxonomy is rejected by Roger Ballen for example, who depict Afrikaners contrary to their self-constructed presence as the superior (Slowe 2015:[sp]; Louw-Potgieter 1951:8; February 2009:110). Portraits that 'type' their sitters in rejection of the metaphysics of presence and the politics of likeness include those by Anthea Pokroy, Marlene Dumas, Pieter Hugo, Frikkie Eksteen and Richardt Strydom. The discussion of the anti-mimetic strategy of masking, that effaces individual identity includes selected portraits by Kendell Geers, and Richardt Strydom.

The portraits discussed in this section challenge what Barthes (1982:34) refers to as the traditional portrait's unobtrusive form. Following the logic of Derrida's signifier, the traditional portrait then "efface[s] itself in the face of the signified content which it transports…" (Derrida 1997a:160).[13]

From mimetic reflection towards methexist participation explores the reappraisal of Plato's mimetology by Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2000), hailed as "one of the most important figures in twentieth century philosophy", (Malpas & Gander 2015:137). Gadamer is also regarded as a "decisive figure in the development of twentieth century hermeneutics" (Zhu 1975:93; Malpas 2014:[sp]). Portraits discussed in the previous section are arguably founded on the nihilistic negation of the self. These anti-mimetic portraits have affinities with Derridean strategies, which expose mimetology as a flawed process. Derrida's theories reveal the inadequacy of mimesis by pointing out the disparity between copy and original (Warnke 2003:56). In contrast to the repudiation of mimesis on the grounds of the rift between original and copy, Hans-Georg Gadamer (2007:314-315) embraces the process of mimesis. He reinterprets Plato's theory of mimesis with an emphasis on the notion of participation

[12] The exhibition catalogue *Kendell Geers 1988 - 2012* (2013) includes an essay written by Bourriaud (2013:88), classifying Geers' work as 'misappropriation' and argues that Geers "bases his work on a resistance to all appropriation".

[13] Andy Warhol foregrounds the notion of representation by administering silkscreen ink in the manner of make-up. By doing so, he addresses Clement Greenberg's criteria of surface integrity (Hopkins 2000:115).

of appearance in idea. Gadamer terms this relationship of participation *methexis* or 'being-with'.

Gadamer's process of methexis is participatory and democratic, since exegesis is the result of interaction between text and interpreter. The methexist participation here is similar to French semiotician Roland Barthes' (1915-1980) theory of the writerly (*scriptible*) text that comes into being through the interaction between text and interpreter (Barthes 1978:148). The democratic nature of interpretation of the writerly text is celebrated by Barthes in his essay "The death of the Author" (1978) [1968], because it sets the interpreter free from the totalitarian process of relying on the author as the source of final meaning. As highlighted by Selden, Widdowson and Brooker (1997:157), the writerly texts negates the former metaphysical status of the author. This is arguably the process that characterises South African (selfie) portraits. The methexist nature of contemporary South African selfies is participatory on various levels. The accessibility of cell phone technologies, the interactivity between self and selfie-image, the participation between image and technology bestow upon selfies a methexist character. Th selfie is also characterised by aesthetic participation, because the sitter can edit his or her own image. Aesthetic participation also entails the appropriation of historical portraits. The allusion to other portraits in the selfies of Tony gum for example, create different layers of meaning. Interpretation becomes 'playful' because meaning is not dictated by the artist. This Gadamerian play often results in a playful pastiche of seminal art historical portraits.

Methexist face off discusses the process of methexist participation (*Teilhabe*) that arguably defines the ontological nature of the selfies discussed in Chapter Six. Methexis supersedes the aesthetic realm when the subject presents a self, unconstrained by the politics of likeness. A participatory logic is exemplified in the selected selfies by Tony Gum (Figures 60 & 61) and Karabo Poppy Moletsane (Figure 62). The portrait-as-presentation is discussed as an ontological event which is on the same "ontological level as what is represented" (Gadamer 2006:135). It is finally through self-authored mimetic play, the trace and *différance* that the subject becomes 'present. The subject presents him or herself to the world through the mediation of selfies and technology.[14]

[14] Gadamer's (2006:117) notion of total mediation highlights the fact that the subject is not mediated in

2 AIM OF THE STUDY

With Gadamer's (2007:xv & 301) notion of "historically effected consciousness" in mind, this study aims to achieve "the right horizon of inquiry" through understanding. One's limited horizon can be broadened through understanding (2006:301), especially by means of the fusion of horizons between supposed separate positions (Gadamer 2006:305). Understanding is created through the discussion of selected portraits. The discussion is based on my own "hermeneutical situation" (Gadamer 2006:301). In order to fulfil this overarching hermeneutical aim, certain argumentative objectives can be established. This study aims to discuss selected portraits in order to establish the link between mimesis, presence and representation. The historical phases discussed below were selected to ultimately shed light on contemporary South African portraiture. In order to fulfil this aim, the following argumentative objectives are identified:

2.1 Portraiture and the metaphysics of presence to illuminate the mimetic representational ontology of traditional portraiture that ties together notions of the stable self, the fixed form of the traditional portrait and 'transparent' visual style. The notion of presence is traced to traditional portraits of the early Renaissance, the Roman era, as well and other examples which exemplify the collapse between the referent and the material substance. The aim here is the discussion of the metaphysics of presence, and its link with the mimetic ontological nature of the traditional portrait. Art historical portraits that appear early in the formation of the notion of the individual are briefly discussed with the aim of highlighting the desire for the subject's eternal presence in the stable form of the portrait.

2.2 The politics of likeness regards 'likeness' as indicator of racial 'essence' (*ousía*) through apparatuses of likeness such as phrenology and physiognomy. The 'innocent' search for presence in the portrait has been usurped by portraits of racial 'essence'. At the same time when European countries developed a national consciousness, its Other was created in anthropological portrait

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the portrait, rather, "it acquires its proper being in being mediated".

studies. This section discusses the manner in which 'inside essence' conflates with the 'external likeness', especially in the nineteenth century in order to paint an anthropological portrait of the sitter. It is argued that these practices reached their pinnacle in the racial classification of the apartheid era.

2.3 Resistance to the politics of likeness post-1994 discusses the reflection of artistic anti-mimetology in anti-colonial sentiments and the rejection of the Western artistic tradition, to which representational portraiture belongs. South African portraits discussed in this section challenge the notion of presence through their anti-mimetology. Instead of complete presence, only traces of the subject remain visible in the portrait. The subject always already differs (*différer*) from its own identity and is thus non-identical to him or herself. South African artists create anti-mimetic portraits, which results in the fragmentation of the metaphysics of presence. The artists selected for discussion post-1994 reject the arrest of racial essences and identify mimesis as a repressive mechanism of Otherisation.

2.4 From mimetic reflection towards methexist participation discusses the reappraisal of the static and linear teleological process of mimesis (*μίμησις*) through Gadamer's notion of methexis (*μέθεξις*). According to Gadamer, Platonic mimesis has always been participatory and circular instead of totalitarian and static. As such, the reappraised mimesis already contains the notion of the trace, *différance* and supplement within its very structure. This section thus aims to bring the "mutually exclusive" (Michelfelder & Palmer 1989:1) theories of Derrida and Gadamer together, to participate in the re-definition of mimesis. The revisited notion of mimesis does not seek truth or *alētheia* (*ἀλήθεια*) through imitation. Rather, *poiesis* or 'creative production' emphasises play.

It is proposed that such a revision of the notion of mimesis turns its traditionally linear character (Figure 7) into a circular and fluid one (Figure 8). As Gadamer (2007:311) contends:

> '[m]imesis' always points in the direction of that which one approaches, or towards which one is orientated, when one represents something. *Methexis*, however, as the Greek *meta* already signifies, implies that one thing is there together with something else [...] Participation ... completes itself ... only in genuine being-together and belonging-together.

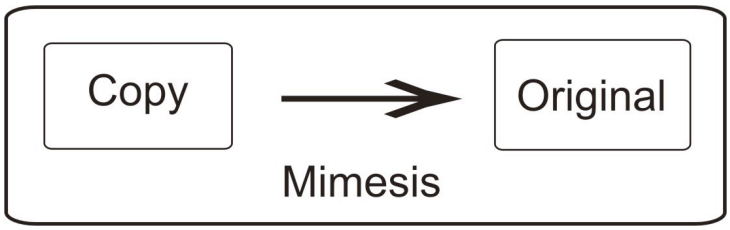

Figure 7: Anette Barnard, *Traditional mimetic process of portraiture*, 2014.

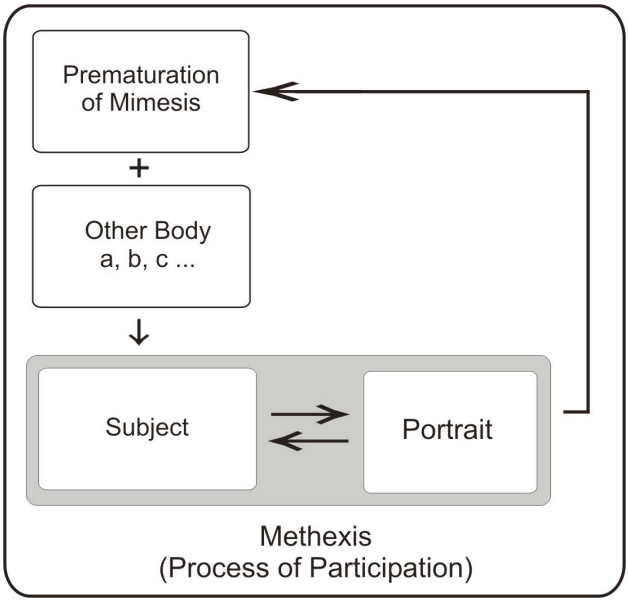

Figure 8: Anette Barnard, *Revised process of portraiture based on an expanded definition of mimesis*, 2014

It is the intention to propose a revised hermeneutic model (Figure 8) of the process of portraiture, partly by synthesising existing theories pertaining to portraiture, but also by expanding on them. This model traces the process of mimesis starting with the entrance into the symbolic order. According to

Lacoue-Labarthe (1989:29), the process of mimesis is operative in the subject from the onset, since the subject is born into a pre-existing symbolic order. It is arguably the symbolic order that informs the nature of the subject's imago. This mental image of the imago becomes the 'other body' that the subject imitates and morphs with for the purpose of the portrait. This process involves the mimicry of ones mental image. In this regard, Barthes (1982:12) points out that one wishes to coincide one's image with one's self. Barthes (1982:13) describes this process as follows: "I do not stop imitating myself […] each time I am (or let myself be) photographed, I invariably suffer from a sensation of inauthenticity, sometimes of imposture (comparable to certain nightmares)". The process of productive methexis is one of participation between subject and portrait-image. The one does not necessarily precede the other. It could be argued that the portrait as well as the self-portrait are based on the process of productive methexis. In both cases the subject creates an 'other body' for imitation and participates in this mental representation by transforming the self into this image. With regards to the self-portrait, an additional self-otherisation occurs when the subject-artist defers this new self to the two-dimensional portrait. With regards to the portrait, the sitter is observed and objectified by an external party (the artist) who transform the new self into yet another representation (the portrait image). The self-portrait lacks this additional external otherisation, whereas the portrait arguably lacks the further self-otherisation.

2.5 Methexist face-off through participation

Methexis entails a *poiesis*, or the production of the self as opposed to the imitation of a pre-existing image. Productive and participatory methexis arguably characterises the ontological nature of the selfie. The aim of this section is to discuss the participatory nature of selected contemporary South African presentations. The Gadamerian philosophical and hermeneutic methexist is arguably transformed into a political process of participation. In a South African context, democratic participation in the construction of the self is arguably seen in the selfie. Apartheid Acts such as the Population Registration Act of 1950, defined and limited individual identity to its racial

'essence'. The Group Areas Act of 1950 allocated different 'races' into specific geographical areas. The selected methexist selfies discussed in this chapter are the result of the sitter's participation in her own image, via democratic technologies of the self such as the smartphone[15].

3 RESEARCH QUESTION AND ASSUMPTIONS

3.1 Research Question

In which manner does a revision of the notion of mimesis allow selected South African portraits to supersede the traditional mimetic referentiality of portraiture by creating the opportunity for the generation of a new participatory presence in the portrait through the process of productive *methexis*?

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

The investigation of the mode of being of portraiture is a challenging endeavour because although portraiture exists as a distinct genre, the consensus of what qualifies as a portrait depends on the conventions of the epoch and location in question.

In addition to the broad definition of portraiture, another challenge is multidisciplinary discursive framework(s) that surrounds the genre. Portraiture does not have a monolithic theoretical framework that characterises its discussion. I therefore intend to focus on the notion of mimesis, since it is at the heart of the process of portraiture. The theory of mimesis has its own pitfalls. With regards to mimesis, Derrida (1989:13) notes that one risks a "mimetic fall" – "a trap consisting with an artfully camouflaged hole", into which even Heidegger fell.

Historically, discussions on portraiture extolled its representational capacity. The subject was perceived as inherently present in the portrait and revealed through a supposedly uncomplicated process of imitation. With regards to historical concepts related to portraiture, Woodall's *Portraiture: facing the subject* (1997), especially the

[15] The democratic nature of the smartphone is highlighted in a study by Donner, Gitau and Marsden (2011:576): "[w]ith low levels of PC use and near-universal mobile ownership, South Africa is an excellent venue to observe mobile Internet use among resource-constrained communities. Some estimate that there are more mobile internet in South Africa than there are traditional Internet users". This view is supported by the Director of Telecoms, Nielsen South Africa, Jan Hutton (2011), more South Africans have access to mobile phones (29 million) than to radio (28 million).

Introduction entitled "Facing the subject" is referred to. Here, Woodall discusses the historical development of the portrait and its social function. Brilliant's *Portraiture* (1991) provides insight into the high referential value of the portrait. This perceived intrinsic referential value also defines the ontological nature of the portrait as mimetic. Freeland's *Portraits in painting and photography* (2007) affirms the representational nature of the portrait. Freeland's discussion has been of immense value in coming to grips with the various roles and types of portraiture. I will draw on these texts in order to construct a traditional view of portraiture in early art history. The aim will be to argue that the sitter's perceived unmediated presence is achieved through mimesis.

Following the logic of Derrida's *Of grammatology* (1997a) and *Writing and difference* (1997b), I will argue that the full presence of the subject can be deconstructed. The notion of presence itself is a phantasm (Derrida 1994:10). Instead of an unproblematised presence in the portrait, the subject is otherised. The portrait itself becomes a sign marked by difference as opposed to sameness to the sitter. Traces of the subject are visible in the portrait instead of his or her immediate and complete presence. I link Derrida's notion of *différance* with Roland Barthes' notion of the 'other body' in *Camera Lucida: reflections on photography* (1982). *Différance* is evident when the subject is continually deferred. It is argued that it is impossible for the subject to become identical to him or herself through mimesis. With regards to the idea of the subject as non-identical to him or herself, a relevant text is Gerard Richter's "A portrait of non-identity" (2002). Richter concurs with the deferral and otherisation identified by Barthes and Derrida. Richter argues that the self-portrait cannot embody the subject because of the process of "perpetual self-differentiation" (2002:4).[16] I refer to Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe's (1989) ideas on mimesis in relation to the notion of presence, to supplement the idea that self-identity cannot be attained. The notion of self-identity is absent in both the portrait and the sitter. These sources highlight the construction of the subject by means of the process of otherisation. They emphasise the gap exists between the self and its representation.

This representational gap means that 'sameness' between sitter and portrait cannot be achieved. This concept of non-identity is arguably celebrated by selected South African artists through non-mimetic devices. Various contemporary artworks

[16] The portrait faces a similar dilemma of 'perpetual self-differentiation' as well as an additional element of external differentiation when the subject is portrayed by the artist.

are discussed in order to highlight the manner in which portraits discussed here arguably conflate mimetic strategies with colonial ones. 'Typing' and masking have been identified as two anti-mimetic strategies against the facialisation of mimesis.

Gadamer discusses the Platonic notion of methexis at length in "Plato as portraitist (2007:293-322), which is a section in the text *Gadamer: A bouquet of later writings* (2007). He only mentions methexis twice in his opus *Truth and method* (2006). However, he provides a more extensive discussion on the concept of play (*Spiel*), as an explanation for the ontological nature (Gadamer 2006:viii) of artworks. Gadamer's (2006:viii) discussion of play ("the ontological valence of the picture") is of great importance to the discussion of methexis. The reason for this is that the concepts of play and participation both belong to the nature of methexis. This character is non-linear, non-static and non-teleological, because play "has no goal which brings it to an end" (Gadamer 2006:104). Gadamer's notion of methexis provides a hermeneutic model for reinterpreting the mimetic process of portraiture that does not entail the mimesis of the original by the copy. Instead, a reality comes into being through the (re)presentation. Gadamer places the presentation on the same ontological level as the thing that is represented. In relation to portraiture, the notion of presentation entails that neither the self nor the portrait precedes the other.

5 THEORETICAL APPROACH OF THE STUDY

This study falls within the ambit of visual culture studies. Gillian Rose (2012:2) points out that current discourses regard the visual as fundamental "[...] to the cultural construction of social life in contemporary Western societies". According to Rose (2012:2), one relates to the world in a visual manner through visual technologies such as photography, television and surveillance footage, amongst others. Visual culture is concerned with examining the consequences of images (Rose 2012:3-4). Rose's (2012:14) reference to Nancy Concee's definition of visual culture as "a process and not a thing" resonates with the focus of this study. The focus is the discussion of the mimetic process that underpins the ontological nature of the portrait.

Historical studies, philosophical perspectives, poststructuralist theories and hermeneutics are used to investigate the traditional ontological nature of portraiture. These perspectives will inform the argument that the traditional portrait is based on the ideas of the coherent subject, the stable system of signification, and the mimetic

process in order to capture the subject. The deconstruction of the traditional mimetic process of portraiture is investigated by means of a poststructuralist theoretical paradigm. Poststructuralism exposes the ontologically unstable systems of signification (Cuddon 1991:735), including portraiture.

Derrida's discourse on deconstruction that encompasses the theories of *différance*, play, the trace and the supplement is used to facilitate the discussion regarding the subject's perceived presence in the portrait. The framework of deconstruction has affinities with one of the aims of the study, which is to expose the internal contradiction within portraiture as a signifying system. The contradiction is arguably that the play of mimesis only produces difference and widens the gap that already exists between the portrait-copy and the subject. The sitter's presence can therefore only be 'captured' through absence.

The above theories are incorporated into a hermeneutic model used to investigate the manner in which the subject comes into being through the portrait. The genealogy of hermeneutic theory is admittedly conservative and seems incompatible with a nihilistic and anarchistic theory such as deconstruction.[17] In addition to possible methodological inconsistencies, is the well-documented refusal of Derrida and Gadamer to participate in meaningful theoretical engagement.[18] Gadamer's (2007:376) provocative remark that "... deconstruction clearly falls within the realm of hermeneutics" will be addressed in this study. The affinities between Gadamer's methexis and Derrida's criticism of mimesis will be pointed out in Chapter Five to construct a hermeneutic model of contemporary portraiture. Such a hermeneutical model might arguably lead to a non-totalising framework for the exegesis of the process of examples of contemporary South African portraiture.

[17] Hermeneutic theory was developed by German Protestant theologians as a model of Biblical interpretation (Cuddon 1991:405).

[18] The disagreement became known at a Sorbonne conference in Paris in 1981. Discourses arising from the event appear in *Dialogue and deconstruction: the Gadamer-Derrida encounter* by Diane P Michelfelder and Richard E Palmer (1989). Gadamer's claim to wish to come to an understanding with Derrida is arguably undermined by his efforts to 'deconstruct' Derrida's theories, including that of the trace, by pointing out Derrida's limited and cursory use of the term (Gadamer 2007:372).

6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on qualitative research, which entails the following:

6.1 A literature survey pertaining to portraiture is conducted which includes text based theories such as hermeneutics, poststructuralism, and postmodernism. Theories regarding racial essence are investigated in order to understand the discourse of race, which had a great influence on portraiture. The theoretical component consists of the critical investigation of literature regarding the nature of contemporary South African portraiture.

6.2 Primary research is conducted on contemporary South African visual artworks. The portraits that will be considered for analysis portray single subjects, because this type of portrait is traditionally associated with portraying both the 'essence' and the likeness (*Abbildung*) of the individual. Group portraits and portraits of couples emphasise the relationship or the common interest amongst the sitters.[19] This study takes a thematic approach in selecting portraits for discussion. Historically influential portraits, such as those by Flemish painter Jan van Eyck (1370-1441), Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), Frans Hals (1580-1666), and Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), will be discussed in order highlight the desire to capture the sitter's presence in the portrait through a faithful mimetic process. Artefacts and works such as the Shroud of Turin, the African Mukuyi death mask and Victorian death portraits are discussed in terms of the notion of presence. It is also argued that the notion of presence has affinities with the desire to remain present in the afterlife. The notion of presence is thus metaphysical.

It is argued that metaphysical presence is transformed into a political presence during the Victorian period. Anthropological portraits, such as the composite portraits by Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), discourses by French aristocrat and anthropologist Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (1816-1882), and portraits by anthropologist Gustav Theodor Fritsch will be investigated. The aim of this discussion is to highlight the construction of the discourse of

[19] This study focuses on artistic portraits for analysis and will therefore not consider sub-genres such as documentary, legal, anthropological and medical photographic portraits.

race. This discourse underpins the Politics of Likeness that culminated in the apartheid racial taxonomy. Portraits that intentionally attempt to sever themselves from this mimetic relationship are mainly produced after the period of 1995 and are focussed on in Chapter Four. It is argued that these portraits employ anti-mimetic strategies to resist the metanarrative of apartheid. The artists discussed in Chapter Four seem to identify mimesis as a totalitarian mechanism for fixing and arresting presence in the portrait. Their rejection of mimesis is thus political. Anti-mimetic portraits such as Vladimir Tretchikoff's *Black and White* (1959), Roger Ballen's *Sergeant F de Bruin, Department of Prisons employee, Orange Free State, 1992*; Marlene Dumas' *Black Drawings* (1991-1992), Anthea Pokroy's *490 Gingers arranged by colour* (2013); Pieter Hugo's *Portraits* (2003); Frikkie Eksteen's *Stock Characters* series (2011), and Richardt Strydom's *Familieportret 2* (2008) are discussed. Self-portraits by Kendell Geers such as *Self-portrait* (1995), *Mined* (2010), *Portrait of the artist as a young man* (1993), *Out of Africa* (1994) and Richardt Strydom's portraits and self-portraits in the *White Mask* series are discussed. These portraits arguably challenge referentiality by means of notions of the trace and *différance.* Whether the artists discussed here intentionally subvert the notion of presence in their portraits through the trace and through *différance* almost becomes immaterial in the light of Barthes' dethroning of the author. The reader is therefore free to interpret the texts and to recognise the trace and *différance* as a common thread in the selected works. Chapter Six discusses the methexist nature of the selected selfies. Andy Warhol's self-portraits in drag (1981-1982), as well as 'traditional' selfies by Kimberly 'Kim' Kardashian West (1980-) who has been hailed as the selfie queen, are examined. This is followed by a discussion on South African selfies. Mimetology raises its head in selfies as well, resulting in repressive portraits that otherise their subjects. Mimetic otherisation is evident in the blackface selfies by Hungarian journalist Boglarka Balogh's "I morphed myself into tribal women to raise awareness of their secluded cultures" (Balogh 2016) (Figure 55). It also appears in South African blackface portrayals by University of Pretoria students (Figure 56). Finally, it is argued that the selected selfies exemplify play and democratic participation. They are thus methexist in nature. Selected selfies by Tony Gum, the South African 'It

Girl' and 'Queen of Selfies' as well as those by the young designer and illustrator Karabo Poppy Moletsane are discussed. Methexist participation is arguably democratic in nature. It is to the notion of the metaphysical presence in the traditional portrait that this study now turns.

CHAPTER TWO

PORTRAITURE AND THE METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE

'Don't you know', I asked, 'that our soul is immortal and never perishes?'
He looked at me in astonishment and exclaimed, 'Good Lord no!
Are you prepared to maintain it is?'
(Plato 1979:440).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the manner in which traditional portraiture is perceived to contain the presence of the sitter.[1] It is argued that the perception of the sitter's presence is created by the ontological nature of the representation (Harrison 2006:161). The sitter is regarded as being *in* the portrait when the signifier is conflated with its referent. This perception is facilitated by a "transparent visual rhetoric" (Woodall 1997:5) and the careful employment of a "rhetorical strategy of mimesis" (Van Alphen 1997:240). In other words, presence manifests when the sitter is so carefully imitated in his or her essential aspect that the representation stands in for the person. Regarding the illusion of 'transparent' representation, German art historian Hans Belting (1935-) (2005:315) proposes a triadic framework of representation. This framework includes the subject, the mode of representation and the portrait-image. This triad maintains the mimetic status of the portrait.

This chapter aims to discuss historical portraits in a selective chronological manner in relation to the notion of presence. It falls beyond the scope and aim of this chapter to provide a comprehensive chronological historical investigation into the development of Western portraiture. Such an attempt would also be superfluous, since there are numerous historical studies available on the subject of portraiture (e.g. Woodall 1997, West 2004, Cumming 2010, Green 2013, and Hall 2014). Instead, this chapter attempts to put forward the argument that the historical stages of portraiture correlate with the developmental conceptual stages of the sitter's presence. In this regard, Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet (2001:134) asserts that "[s]elf-consciousness coincided first of all with the consciousness of one's reflection, with one's outward representation and visage – I am seen, therefore I am". Presence as exemplified by the portraits of Flemish painter and 'father of oil painting' (Honour & Fleming 1991:376;

[1] 'Presence' may be defined as representational works that create the impression that their referents are 'in' the representation – an impression that borders on the superstitions and the absurd (Harrison 2006:161&162).

Wright, Fisher & Cheresson 2011:24], Jan van Eyck (1370-1441) for example, was initially located in the likeness of the sitter. It then 'progressed' to portraying the character and psychological states of the sitter. This type of portrayal is arguably evident in the portraits of Dutch Baroque painter, Frans Hals (1580-1666). The discussion concludes with the manner in which the portrait has lost its 'original' impetus towards 'pure' presence. This chapter now turns to the discussion of the portrait as mirror that reflects and constructs the subject's presence.

2.2 The transparent rhetoric of mimesis

The portraits selected for discussion in this chapter involve the idea that the subject is 'in there' or *present* in the representation. As mentioned earlier, the illusion that the representation contains the sitter's presence is made possible by mimesis. Mimesis here refers to the notion of representation as verisimilitude (Cuddon 1991:548). Verisimilitude is a mode of representation in which the referent appears present or real. The notion of mimesis is embedded in the very definition of portraiture, because it is inherently a representation *of* someone. Mimesis materialises through the deployment of certain figurative styles such as naturalism, and appears to embody the sitter (Schneider 2002:28). The sitter's presence seems to appear when the representational triad mentioned by Belting, correspond. In other words, when the essential aspect of the sitter surfaces through the application of the medium, the sitter appears to be revealed. Regarding the perception of unmediated presence, Belting (2005:304) points out that "[...] the how is often hard to distinguish from the what; it is the very essence of an image". The sitter *appears* when form (the portrait) cannot be dismantled from its content (the sitter's character or likeness). The perceived transparency renders the medium (*tēchne*) invisible in order for the sitter to appear (Belting 2005:305). The 'transparency' of the medium is arguably evident in the detailed section of Rembrandt's *Small self-portrait* (c. 1655) (Figure 9) below.

Figure 9: Rembrandt van Rijn, detail of Small self-portrait, c. 1655.
Oil on canvas, 48,9 x 40,2 cm
Kunshistorisches Museum, Vienna.
(Van de Wetering 2005:273).

The sorrowful emotion expressed in the sitters' eyes cannot be untangled from Rembrandt's technique. The textured quality of the paint application provides the illusion that his features are embodied in the paint (Van de Wetering 2005:307). Technique and the materiality of the medium thus create the tangible presence of the artist.[2] The unity between the signifier and the signified (Van Alphen 1997:241) here creates the impression that the portrait "carries the referent within itself" (Barthes 1982:5). In this regard, Brilliant (2002:24) argues that "[t]he immanent power of a portrait image stimulates cognition with such a force that the psychodynamics of perception interfere with the comprehension of the image as something different from the image of the actual person".

The mimetic nature of the image is evident in the etymology of the word. The word image can be traced back to the Latin *imāgō*, which refers to a 'copy' or 'likeness'. This notion that the image copies *something*, according to French semiotician Roland Barthes (1915-1980) (1978:32), is central to the notion of representation. Barthes (1978:32) interrogates the nature of mimetic truth when he asks:

[2] This tangible presence of the subject in the portrait is referred to as *kenlijkheyt* (perceptibility) by Van Hoogstraten (Van de Wetering 2005:307). *Kenlijkheyt* is created by the raising (*uitheffing*) of the paint that provides the illusion of plasticity and models the subject in an almost sculptural manner (Van de Wetering 2005:307).

> [...] can analogical representation (the 'copy') produce true systems of signs [...]? [...] the image is in a certain manner the *limit* of meaning, it permits the consideration of a veritable ontology of the process of signification. How does meaning get into the image? Where does it end? And if it ends, what is there *beyond*?

What interests me about Barthes' questions, is that similar questions could be asked about the portrait. For example, how does the sitter 'get' into the portrait-image?[3] The portrait stands in for the sitter when it seems to host the referent *within* the representation (Barthes 1982:5). The authentic portrait therefore, convinces the viewer that the portrait-image *is* the subject (Brilliant 2002). Van Alphen (1997:240) is convinced that portraiture is the only pictorial genre that has mimetic referentiality as a build-in condition. Mimesis therefore could be seen as emblematic of portraiture.

2.3 The will-to-presence

The mimetic portrait is intimately linked to the human being's desire to become and remain present. The idea of presence is associated with the Apollonian ideals of permanence, underpinned by the will-to-existence.[4] One's reflection is arguably very powerful. It is not surprising that "[t]he first image was a portrait" in the form of Narcissus' enthralment with his own reflection (Woodall 1997:1).[5] However, like Narcissus who stared into an empty sign, sitters have looked for meaning in the portrait throughout history. The portrait is perceived to hold the promise of existence after the physical demise of the body and therefore the possibility of the subject's presence in his or her bodily absence. The word 'presence' derives from the Latin word *praesentia* or 'being at hand'. Presence thus entails the idea that one is 'here'

[3] Van Alphen's (1997:240) view on this question would be that there is no 'beyond' the portrait, because the sitter is analeptically constructed in the portrait. Analepsis is a literary device which refers to a disruption of linear chronological events by means a flashback to an earlier point. It entails a chronological reversal, because the sitter who is represented in the past appears to exist in the present. The portrait is also interpreted from the vantage point of the present, and 'contains' meanings that the present viewer brings to it. The illusion of 'beyond the surface' of the portrait is thus created by mimesis.

[4] Camille Paglia (1994:461) refers to the Apollonian as the "form making aspect of mankind", which is linked to the rational and the mind. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) believed that the human is driven by the will-to-power, and not the will-to-existence. Nietzsche states that: "[i]ndeed, the truth was not hit by him who shot at it with the word of the 'will to existence': that will does not exist [...]. Only where there is life is there also will: not will to life but – thus I teach you – will to power" (Magnus & Higgins 1996: 41).

[5] It is important to note that it is impossible to really know what the first image was. As Gombrich (1967:19) points out, "[w]e do not know how art began any more than we know how language started".

'now'. Presence therefore contains spatial as well as temporal dimensions (Falletti, Sofia & Jacono 2016:2). Presence in the portrait thus implies that the gap in space and time can be overcome, allowing the viewer contact with an absent historical figure.

The above idea of presence according to German philosopher and art historian Gottfried Boehm (1920-) (2012:15) is an enhanced presence (*Gegenwart*). An enhanced presence has the magical ability to make those not with us, appear in our midst. As Boehm (2012:16) puts it,

> [t]he attendance of the absentee and the vanished is both the evidence and the biggest achievement of presence. This is, of course an altered presence: it is certainly not a palpable resurrection of the dead. The image is neither a ghost nor a double, and nobody confuses an image with the represented reality.

Figure 10: Punu people, *Mikuyi mask*, undated.
Wood, kaolin, pigments
29,5 x 17.5 cm.
(Mukudj Mask, 19th-20th century 2014)

The portrait brings the absentee to life for the viewer (Boehm 2012:16). The notion of the appearance of presence is exemplified in the Mikuyi death mask from Gabon. The mask represents the transportation of the spirit of the recently deceased to the ancestral world (Meyer 2001:148). The mask becomes the medium in which the spirit of the deceased is made visible. But the mask also has a more profound function. It

changes the status of the deceased to that of an ancestor. It thus has a proleptic quality because it brings the future desired identity into the present. The Mikuyi mask is believed to contain the soul of the subject, but it also becomes a threshold to a different realm. The white colour of the mask symbolises the status of the deceased as a new-born in the ancestral world or afterlife (Sieber & Walker 1987:140; Meyer 2001:148). Historically the white colour was derived from a white powder (*mpemba*), made from the ashes of the bones of the deceased (Punu, objet art of the ethnic Punu [sa]). The key to the subject's everlasting presence is paradoxically sustained through his demise.

For this reason portrait images, even happy ones, are drenched in melancholia. They have their *raison-d'être* in the absence of the portrayed. In this regard, Woodall (1997:8) states that the will-to-naturalistic portraiture is to conquer separation "to render a subject distant in time, spirit, eternally present. It is assumed that a 'good' likeness will perpetually unite the identities to which it refers. This imperative has been appreciated since antiquity". Boehm (2012:18) agrees that the portrait is based on the presence/absence dichotomy. The portrait, which has the extraordinary ability to provide the absentee with a face and a name (Boehm 2012:18) is created with the idea of death or absence in mind.

With each 'progression' of the portrait-image through history, the embodiment of presence becomes more complete and the frontiers of presence are shifted continually (Boehm 2012:18). It can be argued that the image progresses until boundaries between sitter and copy collapse into complete everlasting presence by means of cloning.[6] The visual technologies of every age aim to increase 'presence' to such an extent that ideas of absence are left behind (Boehm 2012:18).

It could be argued that consciousness developed simultaneously with the progression of the portrait. Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet (2001:5) asserts that the process

[6] Regenerative technology uses a person's own stem cells to create a new organ to replace the original one after its loss or failure. No immune suppressants are required since the body does not view the new organ as foreign matter and subsequently does not reject it (Harvard Apparatus Regenerative Technology 2014). This is an example of how the reproduction (new organ) literally coincides with the 'original. The idea that that the individual becomes his or her own simulacra through cloning was abandoned early in this study due to its broad focus. Cloning arguably renders the portrait redundant because the person becomes his or her own representation. The distinction between the original and the representation arguably dissolves through cloning. Presence is achieved by means of portrait 'prostheses' that close the gap between the portrayed and its portrayal. This means that human beings could be immortalised by becoming their own images (Boehm 2012). This idea however has been abandoned in the light of the political developments around the selfie.

of self-objectivising or the recognising one's reflection in the mirror is vital for the 'psychic structuring' that characterises human consciousness. The portrait differentiates the self, and self-conception is created by viewing one's self as external image.[7] In order to recognise one's own mirror-image, one has to perform a mental operation whereby one tries to objectify oneself and separate the inside from the outside (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:5). This process can only work when the viewer recognises the image as his or her own likeness.

2.4 The procession of the subject's presence in the portrait

The discussion regarding the subject's presence in the portrait commences with the Middle Ages, because it is to this period that the seeds of the subject's portrait-presence can be traced. Roman portraiture is an important milestone in the history of art. Frow (2014:251) argues that portraiture as a genre originated in funerary art. Portraits of the dead were 'instruments of magic'. The funerary Fayum portrait (Figure 15) of the Roman period is discussed later in this chapter.

The Middle Ages (c. 476 - c. 1517) were concerned with self-observation and personal salvation and this, according to Hall (2014:[sp]), marks the advent of "a coherent tradition of self-portraiture". The Middle Ages arguably contained the socioeconomic and philosophical elements that paved the way for the modern understanding of the subject. Commercial development and an increase in opulence in Medieval Europe, especially northern Italy and Flanders entailed a desire for autonomy (Crouzet 2001:63-64; Honour & Fleming 2010:382). This singular autonomous being who is able to reflect upon itself also desired to be reproduced in the portrait.

[7] The portrait-mirror unifies the self in a concrete form. Van Alphen (1997:239) points out that the artist *consolidates* the subject's sense of self. He (1997:239) argues that the portrait image secures the being of the sitter. Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) rejects portraiture because it alienates the subject, due to the fact that he or she can never become the portrait-imago. The mimetic gap is thus alienating. Lacan furthermore rejects ego psychology, because the attempt to strengthen the ego only alienates it further "in an imaginary construct" (Woodall 1997:186).

Figure 11: *Virgin and child enthroned between St Theodore and St George*, 6th century AD.
Colour and gold on panel, 68,6 x 47,9 cm.
Monastery of St Catherine, Egypt.
(Honour & Fleming 2010:315).

The idea of self-observation is still incompatible with the hieratic portrayal of subjects in Early Christian or Byzantine art (200 - 500). It is interesting to note that the static hierarchical composition reflects the static position of the human being in the chain of being.[8] The abandonment of the static formulaic composition and the adoption of a more naturalistic style as seen in the icon (Figure 11). This 'portrait' invites the viewer to meet the holy persons or icons face-to-face (Honour & Fleming 2010:315). The traces of the naturalistic style that emerges here is essential for the embodiment of the subjects. These icons (from the Greek *eikōn*, which means likeness, image or representation) (Osborne 1999:553), provided contact between the believer and the religious persona. The notion of the icon was influenced by Imperial Roman effigies. It was believed that the Imperial Image contained the emperor's presence. If the Image is harmed, so is the body of the emperor. Both the Imperial Image and the icon (Figure 11) were thus characterised by the metaphysics of

[8] The conventions of imperial court representation merged with those of the Church. Figures were represented according to rank of importance (De la Croix, Tansey & Kirkpatrick 1991:282). This static code resembles the underlying logic of the Great Chain of Being, as conceptualised by Plato and Aristotle, and expanded further during the Middle Ages. The chain of being commences with God and moves down to "angels, demons, stars, moon, kings, princes, nobles, men, wild animals, domesticated animals, trees, other plants, precious stones, precious minerals and other minerals" (Robishaw 2015:87).

presence. Both were believed to contain the presence of the depicted, whilst pointing beyond the surface to a transcendental being (Honour & Fleming 2010:382).

The metaphysics of presence is also evident in the *Shroud of Turin* (c. 1260-1390). (Figure 12).[9] Nothing could arguably be more authentic than an image painted in the blood of the Subject; an *acheiropoieton* or icon miraculously created.[10] The shroud is believed to be authentic because it has been in contact with the body of Jesus. His blood created the imprint on the cloth. This print is regarded as holy, because it is not a signifier of what is holy, it is the signified itself. It is a supernatural image (Wilcox 2010:xii). Like the traditional portrait, the icon's status depends on its authenticity. It is deemed authentic because it contains the true presence of the subject.[11]

Pope Benedict XVI (2010:[sp]) asserts the *Shroud of Turin* is "an Icon written in blood..." and that "[i]n it we see, as in a mirror, our suffering in the suffering of Christ: *Passio Christi. Passio hominis*". The hope of permanence is also immanent in the shroud, because it is not only a representation of the Subject, it is also a sign of the afterlife and the promise of immortality. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI (2010:[sp]): "[i]t is a marvellous, 'strong' and solid hope, because [the shroud communicates that] death shall be no more". The image of Jesus Christ creates for the believer the possibility of eternal presence. The shroud is believed to be a portrait of Christ, but it also becomes a self-portrait. As Pope Benedict (2010:[sp]) asserts, Christians see in it their own suffering.

[9] Georgoudis applied digital filters to the image, which do not add any additional information to the existing image, but present the original in a more visible manner. Both brightness and saturation have been increased and 'noise' has been removed in order to create a clear image of the represented (Shroud of Turin 2016).

[10] Van de Wetering (2005:2-3) highlights that the term 'authentic' does not remain constant throughout time. The word can signify 'at first hand' (from the Greek *authentikos*). As such, it designates that which is 'genuine' because it is made by the author. In this case, the term *principaal* designates works done by the particular artist hence, a *principaal* is an original (Van de Wetering 2005:2-3). Another meaning of authentic is 'original'. This definition can be problematic because the certified copy has the same legal status as an original.

[11] Numerous studies regarding the status of the *Shroud of Turin* have been conducted. Proponents of its authenticity include Garcia-Valdes (1999), a microbiologist who discovered a coating of plastic manufactured by bacteria. The bacteria causes artifacts to reflect an erroneous recent date, whereas it is in actual fact much older. Wild (1984) contends that the shroud is a forgery, dating back to the14th century.

Figure 12: Dianelos Georgoudis, *Shroud of Turin*: modern photo of the face, positive left, digitally processed image right. 2014 [c. 1260-1390].
Linen, 400,40 x 100,10 cm.
Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, Turin.
(*Shroud of Turin* 2014).

Neo-Platonic philosophy influenced the belief that the icon can present unseen truths (Osborne 1999:554). Images such as *Virgin and child enthroned between St Theodore and St George* (600 AD) and the *Shroud of Turin* (c. 1260-1390) supposedly contain the presence of the represented (Osborne 1999:554). In AD 843, the authority of the icon had the status of the metaphysics of presence, or "of a mystical quasi-identity between the material image" and God (Osborne 1999:554). The icon becomes the point of contact between the believer and God. This contact depended on specific stylistic criteria, such the notion of likeness. The sacred personage should be immediately recognisable. The medieval notion of likeness is still very stylised and not obtained from first-hand observation. The contemporary understanding of the portrait did not yet exist in the Middle Ages (Gombrich 1967:141). Likeness instead meant relying on "the insignia of office", or the iconography that makes a figure recognisable (Gombrich 1967:141). A very important portrait convention originated during this period. The rule that the figure should "face out of the picture" in order to receive the worshipper's prayers (Osborne 1999:554) implied the immediate presence of the holy figures depicted. The icon influenced Western portraiture by means of its

outward facing subjects, as well as the conflation between image (*Bild*) and being (*ousia*). The idea that the icon contains presence was arguably transferred to secular portraiture.

The portraits of Flemish painter, Jan van Eyck (1370-1441) are examples of the emergence of the subject's presence in the secular portrait that emerged in the fifteenth century (Kleiner 2016:564).

Figure 13: Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of a young man (Tymotheos),*1432.
Oil on panel, 34,5 x 19 cm.
National Gallery, London.
[Portrait of a man ('Léal Souvenir') 2016].

Van Eyck's portraits are regarded as prototypical examples of the contemporary idea of likeness (Woodall 1997:2; Schneider 2002:6). The presence of the subject during the early fifteenth century arguably still refers to the notion of bodily presence. The portrait does not yet attempt to portray personality and psychological states of later portraiture (Schneider 2002:6-9). An example of the sitter's presence that is captured in his likeness is *Portrait of a young man* (*Tymotheo*s) (1432) (Figure 13) by Van Eyck. The sitter displays a degree of self-awareness, evident in the inscription in

capital letters LÉAL SOUVENIR (Loyal Remembrance). This epitaph communicates the sitter's desire to live on after death. The inscription verifies the authenticity of the portrait and it also endorses the referential nature of the portrait as a likeness of the sitter, very much like a legal document (Schneider 2002:13). Van Eyck uses typography as a device to emphasise the notion of permanence. The typographic style is a serif Roman font (originally carved into stone with a chisel). Van Eyck imitates this by means of a *trompe l'oeil* technique, creating the illusion that the letters he has painted are carved permanently into real stone [Portrait of a man ('Léal Souvenir') 2016]. *Trompe l'oeil* is a mimetic painting style that depicts an object in an illusionistic manner in order to appear three dimensional on the flat surface of a painting. The technique is meant to deceive the eye (Tansey & Kleiner 1996:1167). The portrait *Tymotheos* is thus highly mimetic because it imitates the sitter's likeness. It also imitates another artistic technique (the serif typography) and this double-mimesis emphasises the notion of presence. Schneider (2002:13) points out that the contemporary understanding of identity (a consistent self that journeys through successive life stages) was not yet in circulation in the fifteenth century. Rather, identity denoted the mimetic correspondence between the portrait-image and its referent (Schneider 2002:13).

Van Eyck thus establishes a new understanding of the subject's presence in the form of "a standardised system of identification and recognition" (Caplan 2001:51). The system of recognition operates on the principle of correspondence between the person and representation or "a set of signs" (Caplan 2001:51). The aim of mimesis is arguably to minimise the difference between portrait and person. These two ontologically separate entities might be then be perceived as one.

The portrait's emphasis on the bodily presence of the sitter was developed further in the portrait of *Marco Barbarigo* (1449-1450) (Figure 14), by a follower of Jan Van Eyck. This portrait portrays a male sitter who seems to hold a letter in his hand for the attention of the viewer. The letter states that the name of the sitter is Marco Barbarigo. Schneider (2002:33) argues that the presence of the inscription had "a real testimonial force" and should not be confused with the mere signature. The letter is possibly a legal document. This interpretation is created by the fact that Roman Law was introduced during this time. This portrait is significant in the development of notions of presence, because it is the prototype for "protocols of [future] identification" (Caplan 2001:52). According to Caplan (2001:52), the signs

that refer to modern identity are evident in this portrait. Similar to *Tymotheos* (Figure 13) discussed previously, this portrait is a highly referential legal document. It serves as a type of identity document, which affirms the presence of the person as a particular individual (Marco Barbarigo [sa]). Like this portrait, the modern identity book, triangulates the system of semiotic signification, by means of the sitter, his full name and his portrait image (Caplan 2001:52). The portrait (or icon) "represent[s] its object mainly by its similarity to it; the relationship between signifier and signified is not arbitrary, but is one of resemblance or likeness" (Caplan 2001:52). Significantly, this portrait thus links likeness and name into a union of identification that points to a stable subject. This subject is individualised by means of a first and last name. The practice of equating a person to a set of signs is arguably still employed here as an 'innocuous' mechanism of identification. In contrast, it is argued later in this study that during apartheid, this practice became part of an iconic system of surveillance. This portrait could thus be viewed as the advent of the subject who is positioned within a legal matrix (Caplan 2001:53). In Groebner's (2001:16) words: "[w]hile official certificates of identity such as letters of introduction were the privilege of specially accredited officeholders in the fifteenth century, [...] new documents of origin and identity came to be demanded [...] in the sixteenth century".

Figure 14: Follower of Jan van Eyck, *Marco Barbarigo*, 1449-1450.
Oil on oak panel, 24.2 x 16 cm.
National Gallery, London.
(Marco Barbarigo [sa]).

The main reasons for the new emphasis on individual likeness is arguably the larger societal changes that happened at the same time: the adoption of Roman Law (later in the sixteenth century), philosophy of humanism and new technologies such as the mirror. Schneider (2002:15) agrees that the verification of the sitter's presence through the portrait became an imperative during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Individualism, as modern construct, was born around AD 1500, partly because people were able to view themselves clearly for the first time in glass mirrors of quality (Hall 2014:[sp]).[12] According to West (2004:164), various factors contributed to the appearance of the first self-portrait. Some of these factors include the existence of the flat mirror, a new type of consciousness that is reflected in narratives about the self, and the altered status of the artist from artisan doing mechanical work to that of a thinking individual. During the Renaissance the (male) individual became an active participant in the commercial environment. He owned property and protected his individual rights. He also desired to see his presence reflected in the mirror. Mirrors, together with the philosophical self-awareness, freed humans from the "shackles of medieval, group-orientated mentalities" (Calenza 2006:xi). The Renaissance emphasised qualities related to the individual, such as *virtú* (knowledge), embodied by the *uomo universale* or the universal man (Fleming 1995:289). Philosophy, the legal system, the economic environment, and technological developments such as the Gutenberg press and the full length mirror were forces that culminated in the seventeenth century Cartesian subject who was autonomous and rational. The mimesis offered by mirrors and portraits is based on the desire for the creation of presence, and the use of these mimetic objects increases self-consciousness (Anderson 2007:ix). The developmental stages of the mirror had a direct influence on the manner in which human beings viewed themselves and the discourse of subjectivity

[12] In the same section, Hall (2014:[sp]) refers to the 'mirror-myth' and points out that since the Roman era, polished metal of a superb quality in which people could observe their reflections were available. It could still be argued that the technical inventions of the Renaissance 'contextualised' the human being in time and space, which contributed to self-awareness. The compass, gunpowder, the mechanical clock and the printing press (Tarnas 1991:225) arguably emphasised the location and presence of the individual. The clock liberates the human being from nature's cycles (Tarnas 1991:225). Perspective was formally studied by Leon Battista Alberti (Spencer 1975). Perspective bolstered the notion of the viewer as the center of the universe. Print and typography further emphasised notions of individualism associated with perspective because it intensified notions of the fixed viewpoint inherent in perspective (McLuhan 2006:187). Print ended the collectivism of tribalism (McLuhan 2006:185).

(Anderson 2007:ix).[13] The mirror helped to establish the idea of the self by enabling its objectification (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:3). The coordination of "exterior perceptions" with "interior sensations" (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:3) helped to create the idea of the Cartesian subject. Through the mirror, consciousness of the body is transformed into consciousness of the inner self (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:3). The mirror is thus "an instrument of self-knowledge" (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:6). It provided the means for defining the boundaries of the individual and for distinguishing the self from its surroundings.

During the Renaissance, the new understanding of the human being as an individual created the need for his presence to be identifiably 'doubled' in the portrait through new conventions (Caplan 2001:51; Schneider 2002:14). Self-portraits as *memoriae* during the 15th and 16th centuries could be seen as significant of a "deep-rooted desire to be 'immortalized', and they often bear references to mortality" (Van de Wetering 2005:XXVI). Another shift in the understanding of the subject's presence took place during the Renaissance. Van Eyck established the notion of presence in likeness, but during the latter part of the fifteenth century, Albrecht Dürer's (1471-1528) portraits innovatively produced a shift from the depiction of exterior likeness towards the portrayal of inward psychological states and personality (Schneider 2002:6-9&19).

[13] The first mirror reportedly was a pool of still water. The first man-made metal mirror was made in 6200 BCE in Anatolia, modern day Turkey. Bronze mirrors were available in civilisations such as ancient Egypt, Rome, Greece, Mycenea, Etruria. These mirrors were either convex (enlarging the self, or concave (reducing the self) (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:10). They were small (approximately 20.32 centimeters). Glass mirrors were introduced by the Romans, who coated blown glass bowls with metal, producing a convex mirror of rather poor quality. The Romans also used metal and obsidian, a dark volcanic rock that is capable of reflecting objects (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:12). The technique of producing a clear thin piece of glass, which can be covered by a layer of hot metal (reflective silvering) without cracking the glass, is vital for the production of glass mirrors. Therefore, in Roman times this glass mirror was still small and convex and it cast a distorted reflection (examples in 1514 paintings). The mirror's development came to a standstill during the Middle Ages, and was rediscovered in the Renaissance in the early fifteenth century when glass makers from Murano produced superb flat mirrors of a larger size, with metal at the back. Venice exported tray-sized mirrors to the East and the rest of Europe (Melchoir-Bonnet 2002:21), but the mirror making glass blowing techniques could still not produce full length mirrors (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:21). Common tin mirrors were widely used by the start of the sixteenth century (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:22). Glass and steel mirrors co-existed during the sixteenth century (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:24). Mirrors were rare before 1630 (Melchoir-Bonnet 2001:28). Between 1638 and 1648 they became popular (one mirror per every three households).

Figure 15: *Mummy portrait of a young woman, known as "L'Européenne",* 3d century.
Encaustic wax painting on wood, 42 x 24 cm.
Musée de Louvre, Paris.
(Portrait of a woman known as *"L'Européenne"* Louvre 2016).

As mentioned earlier, the adoption of Roman Law during the sixteenth century introduced a structural change in portraiture and reinforced the metaphysical relationship of correspondence between the subject and its accurate representation. Naturalistic Fayum portraits produced during the Roman era in Egypt, were painted on mummy wooden coffins (West 2004:15). The aim of its naturalism is interwoven with ideas of the afterlife. According to Berger (2015:54) Fayum portraits "served a double function – they were identity pictures – like passport photos – for the dead on their journey" to the afterlife and they functioned as mementoes for loved ones left behind. The naturalism here therefore coincides with the presence of Roman Law. Roman Law started to replace the Canon law in Germany after the establishment of Roman Law chairs in Heidelberg (1378), Basel (1460), Ingolstadt (1472), and Vienna (1493), amongst other German cities. In order to practice law, a university degree became a requirement as opposed to the study of theology (Lobingier 1916:562). This in turn emphasised the importance of reason and the application of the human being's

rational faculties. In the fourteenth century, the Reception of Roman civil law came at the expense of the Canon Law, which consists of ecclesiastical rules and regulations (Lobingier 1916:563 & 565). Roman law became popular amongst civilians after the publication of the book *Mirror of judicial plaints*. It became reflected in legislation, for example in the German *Klagspiegel*, which is an adapted Roman criminal procedure. German Renaissance jurist and juridical writer Ulrich Zasius (1461-1536), recognised the link between Roman law and Humanism. Both emphasised the agency of the individual. The Reception of Roman law entailed a set of individual human rights such as the right to vote (*ius suffragiorum*), the right to stand for public office (*ius honorum*), the right to own property and enter into legal contracts (*ius comercii*), and general human rights (*ius gentium*) amongst others (Berger 1953:527). *Individuus* means 'indivisable' (*indivisus*) and refers to "things or rights which cannot be divided and things which cannot be separated into parts" (Berger 1953:499). The notion of the individual derives from the above terms and he or she is *indivisus*, and therefore regarded as a whole. The Roman legal subject was rediscovered and developed further during the Renaissance. The above Roman laws thus regard the individual as a separate legal entity. This is reflected in early Renaissance portraits that identified subjects in a legal sense (Schneider 2002:14-15), as exemplified by the portraits of Van Eyck and his follower. Increasingly, the portrait added character to likeness, since complex economic trade depended on the "ability to 'read' the intentions of business partners" during the latter part of the quattrocento (Schneider 2002:[sp]). In this sense, the Renaissance portrait is very similar to the self-portraits, or rather selfies that are uploaded onto social media platforms. Selfies 'market' the individual to an intended audience and brand him or her in a favourable light. In this regard Du Preez (2013:281) states that the aim of the selfie is not so much to document the sitter's likeness. Rather, it is created in anticipation for the future viewer's fleeting gaze (Du Preez 2013:281). Both Dürer and the sitter of the selfie therefore present a curated and agreeable face to their respective audiences. During the Renaissance, the imperative for identifying the individual increased the demand for naturalistic representations of subjects (Schneider 2002:[sp]). This new need for identification changed the dominant aesthetic of portraiture (Schneider 2002:[sp]).

Figure 16: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait at 26*, 1498.
Oil on wood panel, 51 x 41 cm.
Museo del Prado, Madrid.
[*Self-portrait (Dürer, Madrid)* 2014].

During the cinquecento, likeness and personality coalesced in the attempt to ward off mortality. Dürer's statement that "[t]he art of painting preserves the figure of the subject after his death" is evident of the desire to remain present (Sauerländer 2011). Although the individual became more independent and economically powerful, he remains powerless in the face of death. Dürer here recognises the potential of the portrait to safeguard the sitter's immortal presence (Schneider 2002:28). Dürer's awareness of the interrelationship between mortality and portraiture is evident in his portrait of Willibald Pirckheimer that bears the inscription "Portrait of Willibald Pirckheimer at the age of fifty-three. We live by the spirit. The rest belongs to death" (Willibald Pirckheimer: V&A Search the Collections 2014).

The portrayal of the inner states of the individual is evident in Dürer's *Self-portrait at 26* (1498). This work is referred to as an "art-historical milestone" (Freeland 2001:97) and Dürer is regarded as a "progenitor of the autonomous self-

portrait" (Freeland 2001:98). The referential value (likeness) of this self-portrait is emphasised by the inscription declaring that "I made this according to my appearance when I was 26". This portrait is however not entirely mimetic. The portrait here assumes a new function. It *constructs* Dürer's presence as opposed to merely *reflecting* it. Dürer's ideal self is embodied in this portrait and he uses portraiture as a "tool for personal exploration" (Platzman 2001:[sp]). His desired status as a gentleman comes into being through this portrait. This process is similar to the previous example of the ancestor who manifests through the African mask (Figure 10). Without the materiality of the portrait, Dürer's self would probably remain a mental image, known only to himself. The portrait allows for his desired presence and its corresponding authority to be transposed onto himself by means of analogy. In a reverse logic, the viewer then conflates Dürer's ideal portrait-presence with its 'referent'. The participation of the portrait-image in the self; and the self in the portrait transcends the linear process of mimesis. The reason for this transcendence is because the portrait is not purely mimetic, it is also proleptic. Prolepsis is a device to make a future event seem as if it has already happened (Cuddon 1991:747). Dürer's portrait is thus an example of prolepsis, because his desired (future) presence is brought to bear on the present one. Already here, 'pure' mimetology is surpassed because the portrait is that of a yet unborn identity. This new aspect of Dürer does not exist yet and still has to come into being when the viewer attributes to Dürer the qualities of the portrait. The reason why Dürer's depicts his desired self is because at the time in Germany, artists were regarded as craftsmen, in contrast to the artists in Italy who enjoyed a high social standing, a status that Dürer aspired to. This desire is evident in a letter he wrote to wealthy Renaissance humanist, friend and patron, Willibald Pirckheimer (1470-1530) while he was in Italy during October 1506: "[h]ow I shall freeze after this sun! …Here I am a gentleman, at home only a parasite" (Silver & Smith 2010:114). There is a stark contrast between this low notion he has of himself ("a parasite") and the proud and refined demeanour captured in his self-portrait. His *Self-portrait at 26* thus proclaims his newfound social standing upon his return to Nuremberg (Bohn & Saslow 2013:196).[14]

[14] According to King (2014:168), during the Renaissance, artists were part of the guild system, in which they were apprenticed and employed to a master to execute commissions. In contrast to the humanists of a higher rank, they only had artisan status, but their status rose increasingly as did their contact with the elite through commissioned work. Artists started to loosen themselves from their artisan status connected to the workshop system and insisted on their independent agency.

Figure 17: Albrecht Dürer, *Self-portrait with fur-trimmed robe*, 1500.
Oil on wood panel, 66,3 x 49 cm.
Alte Pinakothek, Munich.
(Self-portrait with fur-trimmed robe (1500). [sa])

Dürer's *Self-portrait* (1500) pushes the principle of prolepsis to the extreme when he controversially likens his own agency and power on par with that of Jesus Christ (*conformitas Christi)*. His frontal pose resembles the icon on Veronica's cloth, and he uses imitation to transfer perceived powerful qualities onto himself. The analogy to Christ is used as a strategy to raise his own status (West 2004:168). In contrast, his actual status comes to the fore in his letters to Willibald Pirckheimer (especially the letter written on the 6th of January 1506) in which he assumes a very humble tone. He is very conscious of the monetary debt that he owes Pirckheimer. He is also aware of the fact that he is not a free agent - he is the sole bread winner and has to look after his mother, wife and child (Einstein 2014). Reading these letters, it is hard to reconcile the proud, almost vain individual in the portraits with the man begging for an extension to the deadline for his debt repayment. Nevertheless, his desire to become an eternal presence is evident in the Latin inscription in the upper left hand corner proclaims that "I, Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg, portrayed myself in everlasting colours aged twenty-eight years" (Springer 2013:[sp]).

Dürer's portraits exemplify the notion of the Renaissance autonomous individual, of which the modern self later became an extension. It is important to note that Dürer's self-portraits stand at the precipice of the Reformation, which is regarded by many scholars as the historical birth of modernity (Parker & Bentley 2007:1).[15] This notion of the consistent self in which various life periods culminate is evident in Dürer's portraits. It came into its full being in the writings of French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650) (Schneider 2002:13). It could be argued that Descartes' theories inadvertently reinforced the idea of the subject's presence in the portrait.[16] The Cartesian self-conscious 'I' who proclaims *Cogito, ergo sum* is certain of his or her existence (Tarnas 1991:277).[17] Descartes' subject is an individual who possesses self-awareness, and who is able to think autonomously (Elder-Vass 2012:185). Without the portrait there would arguably not be a unified 'I'. Descartes' view that sense perception is subjective and truth is grasped through the rational faculties poses a potential problem for portraiture. The portrait is highly dependent on the sense perception of the artist, as well as the sensual qualities of the medium to embody the subject. However, the portrait resolves this dichotomy by conveying inner presence (mind) through the bodily exterior (Freeland 2007:95). The capturing of the essence (inside) of the sitter to bring to the surface his or her self-awareness is especially evident in portraits of the 1600's.

[15] The consensus that the Renaissance is the starting point of modernity originated in Jacob Burckhardt's *Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) and twentieth century thinkers subsequently associated the Renaissance with "the emergence of a modern individualist spirit" (Parker & Bentley 2007:1).

[16] Descartes' *Discourse on the Method* for *conducting one's reason well and searching for truth in the sciences* (1637) forms the foundation of a methodology with regards to knowledge, and his *Meditations on first philosophy* (1641) contained a philosophical discussion of this new methodology (Cress 1998:viii).

[17] It could be argued that the emphasis placed on individualism and self-reflection of the early sixteenth century by Martin Luther (1483-1546) paved the way for the Cartesian individual of the latter part of the sixteenth century. Luther's proposition that individuals should learn how to read and interpret the Bible for themselves created a shift in authority away from the collective and towards the individual (Fleming 1995:337). The Reformation (1517-1648) also arguably influenced the development of portraiture in an indirect manner, because in Protestant countries, the demand for altar pieces and devotional paintings declined, and artists started to focus on secular genres such as portraiture (Gombrich 1967:279).

Figure 18: Frans Hals, *Malle Babbe*, 1633.
Oil on canvas, 75 x 64 cm
Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.
(Malle Babbe 2016).

One could thus draw parallels between Descartes' foregrounding of the mind and consciousness and an increase in the artistic portrayal of the 'inward' character of the sitter. Descartes' logic of inquiry inadvertently influenced portraiture through the use of 'inner' reason to grasp the essence of the subject instead of relying on deceptive sense perception to capture likeness.[18] As mentioned before, the Cartesian dualism of mind/body; reason/sense perception is resolved in portraits such as Frans Hals' (1580-1666) *Malle Babbe* (1633-1635). Significantly, Malle Babbe was painted only two years before the publication of Descartes' *Discourse on Method* (1637). According to historical records, Malle Babbe was a resident of the hospice Het Dolhuys, and Hals probably met her there when visiting his son (Redactie Oneindig Noord-Holland 2013). The sitter's unstable psychological state (*malle* or loony) is possibly signified by the owl that perches on her shoulder. The owl, which is traditionally associated with wisdom, arguably provides insight into her lunacy (Levendig 2012). This interpretation is supported by the Dutch proverb 'drunk as an owl' (Malle Babbe

[18] Richard Watson (2007) discusses the various portraits of Descartes, including one by Frans Hals (1580-1666) in his book *Cogito ergo sum: The life of René Descartes*.

2017). Her madness is conveyed through the materiality of the paint. Her inner mental states (*res cogitans* or consciousness, feelings), are revealed through bodily features (*res extensa* or the physical body) (Tarnas 1991:277-278). Malle Babbe's unstable mental state, her crass facial features and the materiality of the paint converge to provide insight into her character, which Hals observed first hand. This has affinities with Descartes' empirical modus operandi. Descartes' method is to reject knowledge based on preconceptions, conventions and customs and to obtain facts from direct personal experience (Clarke 1979:209).[19] For portraiture, this means that conventions must be abandoned, together with what one knows about the sitter, and search for the character that is untainted by one's preconceptions.

2.5 The metaphysics of presence: Memento mori

The emphasis on individual presence in the portrait was further developed in portraiture during the Victorian era (1837 - 1901).[20] Victorian death portraits or memento mori are examples of what Lacoue-Labarthe (1989) refers to as onto-mimetology, or the duplication of the individual in order to maintain his or her presence. These portraits were commissioned by family members in a desperate attempt to capture presence of the recently deceased for the last time (Coil [sp]). Figure 19 depicts a dead girl whose body is carefully arranged in a composition with her dolls and perhaps a favourite dress.

[19] According to Clarke (1979:209), Jan Vermeer's paintings illustrate the logic of Descartes' philosophical and optic inquiry, because of its optical objectivity. However, as argued before, Descartes' emphasis on the mind and reason in observation brings the inner self of the sitter to the fore in the portrait-body.

[20] The discussion proceeds from the seventeenth century example of Frans Hals to the nineteenth and early twentieth century Victorian death portraits. The reason for this gap in the discussion is because although chronological, the aim here is not a historical overview of the portrait but to highlight major innovations in the metaphysics of presence. As such, it could be argued that the innovations by earlier artists such as Dürer and Hals were repeated in various ways in subsequent portraits either to display wealth, or mental states. For example, Jacques Louis-David's *Napoleon in his study* (1812) reveals the proleptic transference of portrait image onto sitter and Courbet's self-portraits portray his various moods. The Victorian death portraits are arguably the next innovative stage in portraiture in terms of capturing the presence of the sitter.

Figure 19: [Author's description of image].
(Victorian memento mori with dolls).
Photograph.
(Viralnova 2014).

Her presence is constructed posthumously in a manner in which the living want to remember her. Perhaps the dolls held a special significance and reminded those left behind of occasions such as birthdays or Christmases. The girl's eyes are closed as if she is merely asleep, whereas the dolls eyes are open. Some dolls aimlessly stare into space, but one doll confronts the viewer. The dead in this example imitates the living to provide the semblance of live presence.

Figure 20: [Author's description of image].
(Victorian memento mori 'asleep')
Daguerreotype.
(The Thanatos archive 2016)

Figure 20 exemplifies how mimesis is employed to establish the presence of the (deceased) person as 'alive'. As already mentioned, the aim of this mimicry is to feign the semblance of living presence. The dead becomes their own portraits when their bodies are altered to seem alive. To this end, the lips of the deceased girl (Figure 20) have been painted red and her pupils are most likely photographically retouched to make it appear as if she is focussing on the viewer. The pupils are added to the photograph because the corpse is unable to focus – the eyes are always undirected and dead, even if the photographer aims the camera exactly in line with where the corpse is 'looking' (Coil (2015[sp]). The unfocused eyes of the corpse, whose 'soul' has left, reinforces the idea that the eyes are the windows to the soul that resides 'in' the body.[21] Once it leaves the body there can be no presence, only a mimetic semblance remains.

[21] According to the *Daily Mail* (Scientists discover that eyes really are 'the windows to the soul' 2007), there might be some truth in anthropometric practices. According to the report, the patterns of the iris reveals specific character types. The frontal lobe of the brain that is responsible for personality is linked to the development of the iris. Ironically, the biometric state practices examined in the next chapter is under investigation by officials in London for security aims.

These portraits were produced by new photographic technology of the time. The advent of the daguerreotype in 1839 made it more affordable to immortalise a loved one. The traditional oil portrait painting was out of the reach of the average person. Photographs during the Victorian era were still very expensive, unlike the contemporary selfie [22] Because of the cost of portraiture, the death portrait was often the only representation of the family possessed of the deceased. Unlike the portraits discussed thus far, the sitter will never view his or her portrait. The sitter's lasting presence is here only achieved through his or her demise. In this sense, the Victorian photographic death portrait is similar to the death mask – it has its raison d'être in the individual's absence. Before photography was invented, a person's likeness was captured by the death mask that embodied the absence of the sitter's once present body (Pryor 2016).[23]

The philosophy of humanism that emphasised individualism also played an important role in the Victorian era (1837-1901). Humanist philosophy is evident in the description of the Victorian era as 'the century of hope', which is the promise of freedom and self-realisation. These ideas are offered by prominent British theorists such as Adam Smith (1723-1790), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). Victorian portraiture was directly influenced by the views of the Victorian humanist philosopher Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) (Barlow 1997:219). Carlyle contributed to the existing discourse on portraiture, specifically the notion of authenticity as marker of the sitter's unique presence.[24] For Carlyle, the understanding of history is important and the faithful portrait likeness can assist in an historical

[22] The will-to-presence is also evident in the cheap carte-de-visite of the mid-Victorian period (1851) (West 2004:158), invented by André Eugène Disdèri. The carte-de-visite drew criticism from photographers such as Julia Margaret Cameron, for its inferior technical quality and its propensity to portray the sitter's ephemeral aspects as opposed to his or her lasting essence, exemplified in the portrait (and writings) of Victorian humanist philosopher Thomas Carlyle for example (West 2004:157). In this regard, the carte-de-visite is similar to the contemporary selfie that is often contrasted with traditional self-portraits.

[23] The death mask of Napoleon Bonaparte's fetched £169,250 at London's Bonhams Book, Map and Manuscript in 2013. Its monetary value is here testament to the perceived presence and contact with the historical figure.

[24] Portraiture during the Victorian era intensified previous portrayals of the individual's hidden mental states, character and personality. The humanist notion of viewing the universe from the perspective of man (Tarnas 1991:366) is echoed in the viewing of the portrait from a specific perspective. The portrait revolves around the individual, and shares humanist views that the world is stage of the human's actions and drama (Tarnas 1991:366). The humanist character of the Romantic period prompts Tarnas (1991:367) to assert that "[i]ndeed, on many fronts at once, the Western ego gained substance and impetus [...]" (Tarnas 1991:367).

understanding. The portrait facilitates historical understanding by transforming "vague political names into recognisable human beings" (Barlow 1997:220). Authentic portraits are thought to be accurate records that provide insight into the characters and accomplishments of great historical figures (Morrow 2007:162). For Carlyle, the authentic portrait condenses "the subject's essence and mannerisms" into one image. In other words, the portrait ought to summarise the person's life, and not provide a fleeting ephemeral impression (Watts cf Barlow 1997:234). The authentic portrait portrays the "storms and vicissitudes" faced by the sitter during his or life (Watts cf Barlow 1997:234). The authentic portrait ought to seem alive and "should appear capable of action but performing none" (Watts cf Barlow 1997:234). The successful portrait thus contains "an entire biography" (Watts cf Barlow 1997:234). The portrait should thus capture the authentic essence of the sitter and the contemplation of this essence, will also facilitate the understanding of history. According to Barlow (1997:219), the notion of the authentic portrait is a distinct Victorian notion. It gained huge impetus by the establishment of the National Portrait Gallery in London in 1856. English humanist William Hazlitt (1778-1830) supported this idea of the authentic portrait, and he added a new dimension to the existing notion of authenticity. His ideas on portraiture are metaphysical because he emphasises identity and 'authentic' character (Natarajan, Paulin & Wu 2006:38-39). The Victorian period added a new understanding to portraiture, as a point of contact between past and present (Barlow 1997:226). In this regard, Hazlitt (cf Barlow 1997:226) states that:

> In an age in which culture is experienced as fragmented and unstable, the portrait provides a link with an imaginary community of lost cultural intimacy [...] In an increasingly complex and impersonal society portraiture identifies the human source of thought and action, offering the prospect of a direct and intimate relationship between one individual and another.

Hazlitt's definition of contact arguably contains the meaning of Walter Benjamin's (1892-1940) notion of the aura. According to Walter Benjamin (2008) [1936] authenticity is created when the object becomes a witness of history and has gained experience, which a reproduction can never have. The authentic object contains "a presence of time and space" (Benjamin 1936). The portrait contains the aura and presence of the sitter, but has an aura itself because it derives authentically from a historical period, providing the viewer contact with admired personalities. In this

sense, portraiture has the ability to unify a fragmented society and can play a role in the construction of nationalism. Through viewing the portraits of the London National Gallery, the alienated modern (Victorian) individual who is part of an increasingly cold industrial society (Art and Nationalism in London Museums: Representing Britain 2016) "would be revitalised by contact with images of those whose lives ad contributed to the development of a national culture" (Barlow 1997:227). This contact is created, according to Carlyle (2004), when the painter observes the sitter with his own eyes, and the viewer contemplates the perceived presence of the portrayed. Barlow (1997:221) states that according to the authentic Victorian portrait, "[...] the viewer could in imagination stand in the place of the original artist as he had once looked at the sitter, and so travel back in time to the moment when the sitter lived". The authentic portrait therefore offers contact with the past, it provides a face to history and it exemplifies the 'iconic gathering' or the condensation of desirable nationalistic characteristics worthy of emulation by alienated citizens.

Before discussing the implications of the Victorian notion of portraiture in the South African context, it is important to note the emphasis placed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) on the notion of essence. Hegel died a few years before the Victorian era commenced, but he had a considerable influence on the latter part of the nineteenth century (Tibor 1980:49). Similar to the views of Carlyle, Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* (1886) argues that 'essence' in the portrait is an embodiment of the subject's "general character and lasting spiritual qualities" (Schneider 2002:15). This view exemplifies a newfound introspection with regards to identity (Schneider 2002:15). The idea that the subject has a "central defining essence that transcends its social and historical location" (Cruikshank 2001:218) is imperative for the presence of the subject in the portrait. In this regard, Hegel asserts that:

> [the artist] must omit little hairs, pores, little scars, blemishes, and grasp and represent the subject in its universal character and in its steadfast individuality. It makes a great difference whether the artist merely reproduces a person's physiognomy, as it quietly presents itself to him in its surface and external configuration, or whether the artist insightfully represents the true features which express the subject's own soul. For the Ideal necessitates, without exception, that the external form accord with the soul (cf Beiser 1993:366 & 367).

It is clear that according to Hegel, the authentic portrait should only contain essential aspects of the sitter. To this Hegelian idea of individual essence, the Victorians added

a nationalistic dimension to motivate the worker and to provide him with the idea that he is part of something bigger – part of the same culture to which the great historical figures portrayed in portraits also belonged.[25] Portraiture here arguably becomes a tool of social engineering, whereby it is hoped that the viewer mimics the traits of the portrayed.

The discussion now turns to the politics of presence, which, in South Africa, arguably supplanted the metaphysics of presence. Paul Kruger (1825-1904) who lived during the Victorian period (1837-1901) had a tense relationship with Britain, which was at the time ruled by Queen Victoria (1819-1901). Her reign is characterised by British expansion, also in South Africa. This factor inadvertently lead to the formation of a "national consciousness in the Transvaal" (Laband 2014:23). The Afrikaner nationalism of the time was arguably embodied in the figure of Paul Kruger.

2.6 The politics of presence

The politics of presence produce two contrasting portraits, namely the colonial Self and its Other. This section briefly discusses a portrait which exemplifies the 'iconic gathering' of qualities that inadvertently contributed to a nationalistic presence in South Africa. The presence of nationalistic ideas arguable gave rise to the political portrayal of the Other in anthropological and ethnographic portraits discussed in the next chapter.

As realised by Carlyle and Hazlitt, mimetic portrayal is a powerful tool for the construction of nationalism. The portrait of the South African Republican president, Paul Kruger (1825-1904) (Figure 21), is relevant in this regard. Kruger was a contemporary of Carlyle and Hazlitt, who were proponents of the authentic Victorian portrait. The portrait *President Paul Kruger* (1897) (Figure 21) arguably reflects their ideas to some extent.

[25] Van de Wetering (2005:133) however, highlights the danger of anachronism involved in the notion of the authentic portrait. This danger involves the fact that the sitter's presence is retrospectively constructed, from the viewer's present position. The viewer thus sees in the portrait what he or she wants or needs to see (Van de Wetering 2005:133). Van de Wetering asks: "after all, is it not precisely what the so recently vacated twentieth century expected of artists? The assumption that Rembrandt alone did this while producing numerous self-portraits satisfies our tendency – an inheritance of the nineteenth-century cult of genius – to see great artists as figures beyond their own time".

Figure 21: Enrico Rinaldi, *President Paul Kruger*, 1897.
Oil over photograph on canvas, 91,5 x 71,1 cm.
Museum Africa, Johannesburg.
(Photograph courtesy of Museum Africa).

Kruger's portrait conveys his individual character, but his character gains a new dimension, because it merges with nationalistic sentiments. Kruger's portrait does not only depict personal character. Retrospectively, through the eyes of the contemporary viewer, his personal presence conflates with a political one. The portrait represents Kruger in an ordinary suit, without any presidential insignia of office. One could therefore argue that the artist intended this portrait to convey Kruger's personal character as opposed to being a formal portrait of a statesman. However, it is impossible for me as a researcher to disconnect extra-textual political events from his personal character. This fact arguably bolsters the process of exegesis is essentially subjective. Events that he participated in such as the Great Trek (1835-1846) and the First Boer War (1880-1881), as well as his Biblical beliefs add to his character. In turn, his character is transferred to Afrikaners as a group.[26] Paul Kruger personifies

[26] Regarding Kruger's character, South African Prime Minister and statesman, Jan Christiaan Smuts (1870-1950) wrote to Emily Hobhouse (1860-1926) that "[h]e [Kruger] typified the Boer character

Afrikanerdom (Moodie 1975:130; Paul Kruger 2016) and is "[...] noted in South African history as the builder of the Afrikaner nation" (Paul Kruger 2016). The Great Trek is referred to in Biblical terms as the Exodus of the Afrikaners, who viewed themselves as oppressed, like "Israel of old" (Prozesky & Gruchy 1995:89). During the Great Trek, Kruger's family joined the party of Andries Hendrik Potgieter (1792-1852), who came under attack by Zulu warriors. Kruger describes the attack as follows: "children pinioned to their mother's breast by spears, or with their brains dashed out on waggon wheels" – but God heard our prayer" [...] and we followed them and shot them down as they fled [...] (Davenport 2004:[sp]). Accounts such as these construct the Afrikaner as Self, chosen by God and the Zulus as the barbaric Other. Extra-textual political events therefore shape Kruger's portrait presence. Kruger was the first leader to spark the idea of Afrikaners as a separate entity, against the rest (natives, the British and other 'uitlanders'). He strived to unite Afrikaners under an Afrikaner authority, in an independent and separate state. Kruger was present during formative events of Afrikanerdom, for example, when the British recognised the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek* (1856-1902) (the Transvaal) under the Sand Rivier Convention in 1852. He was the leader of the resistance movement when Britain annexed Transvaal in 1877, and became a "champion of his people in the struggle to regain independence" (Kruger 2016). According to Moodie (1980:x), the notion of Afrikaner election that resulted in apartheid is derived from Kruger's Calvinism. He became president of the *Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek* in 1883, and managed to secure the independence of this state through the convention of London in 1884. An early example of segregation is evident in Kruger's regard for the British as *uitlanders* (outlanders, or foreigners).[27] The *uitlander* 'problem' started after gold was discovered in Transvaal, and the issue of voting rights and fair taxation became contentious points.

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both in its brighter and darker aspects, and was no doubt the greatest man – both morally and intellectually – whom the Boer race has yet produced. In his iron will and tenacity, his 'never say die' attitude towards fate, his mystic faith in another world, he represented what is best in all of us. The race that produced such a man *can* never go down [...]" (Martin 2007:478). This noble portrayal is countered by William Morcom, Shepstone's legal adviser who spoke about his bad manners, his dirty greasy hair and his unrefined peasant appearance. More precisely, he referred to Kruger as "decidedly ugly and "gigantically horrible" – an elderly man who spitted "profusely" (Martin 2007:78-79).

[27] Roger Ballen reverses the definition of *uitlander*, by portraying a group of Afrikaners as such in his collection of photographs in *Outland* (2000), and *Platteland* (1994). He undermines the notion that Afrikaners are the chosen people by documenting instances of poverty, disability and inferiority. Ballen's portraits will be briefly discussed in Chapter Four.

During the Second Boer War (1899), when major infrastructure was under British control, Kruger insisted to fight 'to the bitter end', hence the Afrikaans term 'bittereinder'. Afrikaner nationalism (*volkseenheid*) is arguably a product of resistance to British activities in South Africa and images of concentration camps and other cruelties bolstered the sense of unity and identity against a common enemy. In this regard, Laband (2014:23) states that "[p]aradoxically, British occupation seemed to be fomenting a sense of national consciousness in the Transvaal which years of fractious independence had failed to elicit".[28]

Paul Kruger shares the historical stage with Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902), a British statesman who annexed parts of South Africa. Both Kruger and Rhodes are in some circles, hated figures *du jour* during the 2015 university protests in South Africa regarding an increase in tuition fees. This hatred for Kruger is voiced in the vandalisation of his statue by Anton van Wouw (1862-1945) in Church Square. Van Wouw was born in the Netherlands and came to South Africa in 1890 after the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand. Van Wouw was a supporter of Afrikaner nationalism and he sculpted several portraits with a nationalistic theme, including a portrait of Adolf Hitler (1937), President Steyn (1938) and works such as *Kruger in exile* (Anton van Wouw Collection 2016). The defacement of Van Wouw's Kruger statue in Church Square (6 October 2015), coincided with the Rhodes Must Fall campaign.[29]

[28] The propagandistic capabilities of portraiture, and specifically Kruger's portrayal during the Second World War by the Nazis in Germany is evident in the biographical feature film *Ohm Krüger* (1941). The film was an anti-British propaganda effort by the Nazis to portray the British as evil, violent and cruel. The film portrayed the Boers as honest farmers, whereas the British are greedy (and hence Jew-like) in their search of gold. The film justifies the support for the war effort and encourages the Germans to identify with Paul Kruger and the plight of the Afrikaner.

[29] The statue of Queen Victoria in Port Elizabeth was vandalised on 10 April 2015. The statue of General Louis Botha in Cape Town was vandalised on 9 April 2015. The statue of Cecil John Rhodes was removed on 9 April from the University of Cape Town following the Rhodes Must Fall Movement. The Economic Freedom Fighters vandalised the Anglo Boer War memorial statue on 8 April 2015 (The lowdown on the statue takedown 2015). According to the Rhodes Must Fall webpage, this movement consists of students and staff who take a stance against institutional racism at UCT. The controversy around the statue of Rhodes "who is symbolic of the inevitable fall of 'white' supremacy and privilege at our campus" initiated the movement (Rhodes Must Fall 2016).

Figure 22: [Author's description of image].
(Guarding Kruger's likeness), 2015.
(Harding 2015).

Even though the aim is not to discuss political statues and the complex recent controversy over Cecil Rhodes' and Paul Kruger's statues, it deserves mention since it is relevant to the idea that likeness becomes political. This association between politics and likeness is foregrounded by the defacement of his likeness. The political nature of the preservation of likeness is emphasised by the Afrikaner men in military attire (Figure 22) who guard Kruger's statue after its defacement. Mimetology is evident in the fact that racial groups, and their 'corresponding' identities are replicated since the Victorian times in which Kruger lived. Kruger becomes a folk hero to be emulated. His robust 'authentic' character depicted in the portrait is in sharp contrast with the character of the medium. The portrait of Kruger comes into being through mediation. The use of oil paint over the photograph is a double mediation with regards to artistic representation. According to the Hegelian notion (cf Beiser 1993:366 & 367) of authenticity in portraiture, the double mediation removes this portrait from the immediacy of painting, and arguably renders it less authentic. The artist reproduced Kruger's physiognomy accurately through the photographic process, but his 'essence' is arguably added retrospectively through the layers of discourse related to Kruger. Kruger's body, character, Afrikanerdom and apartheid are nevertheless conflated and viewed similar to a medieval icon when his statue was

iconoclastically attacked. It is argued in the next chapter that the politics of likeness replace individual likeness in the portrait. It could be argued that the politics of likeness is the inverse of the mirror-image of the self. In order to know the Self better, it was believed that the image of the Other ought to be captured and interrogated.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the primary aim of portraiture was to establish the presence of the subject. The presence of the subject has been traced from the medieval icon to its transformation into a political presence during the Victorian era. The ontological nature of the portrait was identified as mimetic, which means that the portrait is a highly representational genre. Its seemingly unmediated nature creates the illusion that the viewer gazes at a living person instead of a portrait-representation. Therefore, mimesis collapses the form/content distinction in order for the image to not only represent the sitter, but to become the sitter. Mimetic portraits are founded on the will-to-presence. This entails the desire to establish ones presence in the corporeal world, and to maintain this presence in death. The portrait image thus becomes a kind of 'placeholder' for the absent sitter. The idea that an icon contained a Holy Presence was transferred onto portraiture in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Van Eyck's portraits 'capture' the sitter's presence through the faithful depiction of likeness. To the notion of likeness, Van Eyck's followers added the idea of written identification (name and surname). The presence of the subject is thus established here by two types of signs. It could be argued that this identificatory practice was extended by the modern Identity Book, which is discussed in the next chapter. The discussion explored the idea that the legal definition of the subject gives rise to an emphasis on individual likeness. Realistic likeness is evident in Fayum portraits such as the *Mummy portrait of a young woman, known as "L'Européenne"* (Figure 15). With the rediscovery of Roman law during the Renaissance, a renewed interest in likeness took place. Likeness marked the presence of the individual, as exemplified by the self-portraits by Albrecht Dürer (Figures 16 & 17). Humanist individualism, the increasingly complex commercial environment, and advances in mirror-technologies coalesce to produce the individual subject. *Malle Babbe* (Figure 18) by Frans Hals is an example of the unprecedented conflation of likeness and psychological states. The metaphysics of presence culminated in the Victorian death portrait that was made possible by the invention of the daguerreotype during the

Victorian times. Mimesis is here employed to mimic the former living presence of the deceased. The humanist philosophies of Carlyle and Hazlitt contributed to capturing the essence of the sitter. The portrait was viewed as a condensation of the individual. Victorianism arguably influenced the politics of likeness in South Africa directly. This influence takes the form of artistic views, such as Carlyle's and Hazlitt's, and the anthropological views of the British who came to South Africa during the gold rush in the middle to late nineteenth century. The most important influence however, is arguably the inadvertent establishment of Afrikaner nationalism, as exemplified by the portrait of President Paul Kruger (Figure 21). The increasing hardships that the Afrikaner faced under British rule created the desire for a unified identity in a separate geographical area.

The central aim of the next chapter is to examine the manner in which the portrait becomes political and framed by anthropological and ethnographic conventions.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POLITICS OF LIKENESS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses how the pursuit to capture the sitter's presence in the portrait has gone awry, when likeness became inscribed into the legal system during apartheid South Africa (1948 - 1994).[1] In an anachronistic move while other African countries were decolonising, South Africa's colonial racial architecture was at its zenith (Peffer 2009:48).[2] Likeness became political when South Africans were classified into draconic and predetermined racial categories according to their exterior appearances. Racial classification presents a pre-determined and visible Other to the apartheid state. The aim was for 'non-Whites' to become immediately 'present' by means of their portrayal in state documentation. The state desired to track people's physical presence and used the portrait as a technology of power. The notion of presence in the portrait here becomes a mechanism of control. During 1948 to 1994 in South Africa, the general aim of public portraiture – to present the subject's unique personal identity – was replaced by the presentation of racial type. Traditional portraits continued to be produced, but it is argued that during apartheid, a new type of 'portrait' developed that was inscribed into the legal system. The apartheid government formally institutionalised racial portraits. This 'portrait' focuses on 'race' as indicator of character.[3] This portrait became the (distorted) lens through which identities were defined.[4] As mentioned earlier, presence here refers to knowledge of the sitter's racial identity and geographical location. This practice is referred to by Mirzoeff (2011:1-2)

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[1] Apartheid's racial policy could be divided into three phases since 1948. The first phase is 1948 to 1958, the next phase is from 1958 to 1966, which witnessed the separate development of homelands and the third phase commences in 1966 in which the resistance to apartheid occurs (Derrida 1985:363). It is important to note that even though apartheid has officially ended, its economic and social effects remain to be eradicated in full.

[2] The scramble for Africa started in 1884-1885 with the Berlin Conference (Craven 2015), which Otto von Bismarck convened. It arguably ended in the 1950's, when independence from colonial powers gained momentum, with South West Africa the last country to gain independence in 1990.

[3] Following the lead of Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1985:402), the word 'race' is bracketed in order to acknowledge that it has no essence. The word 'race' is a trope for something entirely different.

[4] It will be argued that apartheid portraits are the product of systematic knowledge and are similar to Said's notion of Orientalism. According to Said (1994a:6), the discourse of Orientalism "not an airy European fantasy [...] but a created body of theory and practice" which was accumulated through the ages. Similarly, the racialised portrait is underpinned by a systematic historical discourse.

as 'visuality'. Visuality is both a perceptual and an imaginary practice that reinforces the authority of the visualiser (Mirzoeff 2011:2). It encompasses the naming, the classification and the practice of defining the subject over which power is exerted (Mirzoeff 2011:3). The aim of visuality is to "separate and segregate those it visualises to prevent them from cohering as political subjects [...] The authority created by visuality is a form of biopower, or "power over life" (Mirzoeff 2011:7). Visuality is thus the key to dominance via a system of surveillance. The visuality of apartheid portraits exerted a biopower over citizens. Portraits arguably became a key part of the systematic panoptic surveillance. Portrait *visuality* is used to "separate and segregate" (Mirzoeff 2011:7) different 'races' in order to maintain the political status quo of 'white' supremacy.

The Population Registration Act of 1950 enforced this will-to-immediate-presence, by declaring it compulsory for all South Africans to carry an identity card. Information relevant to 'white' and 'coloured' groups included the name and sex, racial classification, citizenship, identity number, a photograph and the date on which the card was issued (Population Registration Act 1950, number 13.2). Native groups were required to disclose additional information of ethnic and tribal classification, as well as providing their fingerprints (Population Registration Act 1950 number 13.5). The Abolition of Passes and co-ordination of documents Act No. 67 of 1952 law required 'black' people to carry a Reference Book of 96 pages with them at all times. A triadic system of correspondence was created, this time between portrait, subject and geographical space. Access to certain areas hinged on one's racial profile.

The aim of this chapter is to selectively trace the formation of the apartheid portrait during the early colonial period (1652-1948), leading up to apartheid (1948-1994). An overview of ideas regarding physiognomic likeness during the eighteenth and nineteenth century is provided. The notion of likeness was arguably almost seamlessly transposed into the physiognomic likeness of anthropology. The reason for this is that the portrait by definition portrays the sitter's character through physiognomy. Colonial portraits added a new dimension of 'race' to likeness. To this end, Lavater's physiognomy, Gall's phrenology, Lavery's psychograph, Galton's eugenics and De Gobineau's 'scientific' racist anthropology are discussed as part of the discourse of race. This chapter argues that likeness became political during colonialism and culminated in the apartheid racial taxonomy (1948-1994). It is argued that the idea that the state is a person who maintains his identity through Otherisation.

The origins of physiognomy and its relationship with portraiture are discussed in the following section.

3.2 A brief overview of physiognomic likeness

The notion of physiognomic likeness in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries diverges from the portrait's initial aim of personal identification. During this time, under the aegis of physiognomy, the portrait portrayed individuals in an ideological manner. The portrait here is framed by expansionism, imperialism and colonialism that drove the increasingly racial ideology. Physiognomic portraits conflated likeness with character. The aim is arguably to make it easy to 'judge' the status or character of the sitter through stereotyping. The portrait reflected colonial aspirations because likeness during the nineteenth century became part of a value scale that rated the individual's supposed inferiority or superiority.[5] The development of the portrait entered an overtly ideological stage, and the portrait became a tool of social engineering and colonial politics. As already mentioned, the portrayal of likeness was an aim from the onset of portraiture as a genre in the early fifteenth century (Schneider 2002:6-9). In the eighteenth century however, likeness became formalised (and institutionalised) under scientific pretensions.[6] By the mid nineteenth century, exterior characteristics were firmly linked to supposed essence in the pseudo-scientific disciplines of physical anthropology, craniology (measurement of skull) and

[5] McClintock and Nixon provide an insightful discussion on the link between imperialism and capitalism, and the initial anti-British imperial impetus of the Nationalist government in 1948. McClintock and Nixon (1986:348) note that in the Cape, George Grey and in Natal, Theophilus Shepstone realised the monetary value of 'native reserves' that 'white' farmers could tap into. The need for an African labour force was created by the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1886. Subsequently, land and hut taxes forced African workers to start working for wages and the complex system of labour regulations formed the foundation for the modern notion of apartheid. "The Land Acts of 1913 and 1936" assigned thirteen percent of infertile land to 'black' people (McClintock & Nixon 1986:348). The Bantustans consisted of eighty-one (fragmented) areas of land which have been allocated different 'ethnic' groups and the thirteen percent of land was supposed to host seventy-two percent of South Africa's population (McClintock & Nixon 1986:348). The Bantustans became a kind of heterotopia to which unproductive 'blacks' (the elderly, the sick, women and children) were consigned to (McClintock & Nixon 1986:349). Ironically then, capitalism is 'responsible' for apartheid, as well as its demise. Derrida (1986:365) points out that apartheid is economically inefficient because of "the law of the marketplace".

[6] Physiognomy is an ancient 'science', which later physiognomists like Lavater extrapolated on in the formulation of his theories of character (Gage 1997:121). Precursors to physiognomy include Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*. Aristotle believed that "[i]t is possible to infer character from features, if it is granted that the body and the soul are changed together by the natural affections...". Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus' *The characters* (c. 319 BC) is believed to produce the first structured account of the taxonomy of (disagreeable) character types.

phrenology (the mapping of recessions of the skull) (Van Robbroeck 2008:170). During the nineteenth century, "physical appearances encoded the complete human being, including moral, cultural and intellectual qualities" (Van Robbroeck 2008:170).[7]

The term physiognomy derives from the Greek word *phusiognōmonia* which is broken down into *physis* (nature) and *gnōmōn* (judge or interpreter). Physiognomy is thus the practice of drawing conclusions regarding an individual's 'internal properties' (Lavater 1826:5).[8] These conclusions are based on the appearance of a person (Lavater 1826:5).[9] Swiss founder of physiognomy, Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801) (1826:10) defines physiognomy as follows: "[t]his universal, though tacit confession, that the exterior, the visible, the superficies of objects, indicate their nature, their properties, and that every outward sign is the symbol of some inherent quality [...]". Physiognomy had an enormous influence on portraiture during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe (Gage 1997:121). It also influenced thinking about likeness in South Africa during the past as well as the present.

An early example of this thinking comes from English physician Sir Thomas Browne's (1605-1682) (1841:114) *Religio Medici* (1641). Browne (cf Bennett 2010:100) states that "there is surely a Physiognomy [...] for there are mystically in our faces certain characters which carry in them the motto of our Souls, wherein he that cannot read A.B.C. may read our natures." This quote highlights the conviction that the individual's character is inscribed into his or her facial features. The reflection

[7] Van Wyhe (2004:4) asserts that phrenology was abandoned in the 1870's and 1880s by Thomas Henry Huxley, a Darwinist who practiced the "new professional science", and later rejection of phrenology comes in the form of the more professional psychoanalysis of Freud.

[8] Lavater (1826:5) asserts the disbelievers in physiognomy may wrongly think that all emotions are expressed by the same physiognomic features: that "[...] that joy and grief, pleasure and pain, love and hatred, all exhibit themselves under the same traits, that is to say, under no traits whatever, on the exterior of man". Lavater seems to use the idea that different emotions are differently expressed in the face, to make a case for physiognomy. He (1826:7) also argues that upon a person's first meeting with a stranger, it is inevitable that one would observe, compare, and judge the person one has just met according to physical appearance, even though one has never heard of the practice of physiognomy.

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of essence in likeness opens the door for the ideological construction of the subject in portrait representations.

Figure 23: Psychograph, 1905.
(Psychograph Machine 2012)

Phrenology is an extreme form of physiognomy. It refers to the 'scientific' practice of equating likeness with character and started in the 1790's. Austrian physician Franz Joseph Gall (1756-1828) who is the founder of phrenology, claimed that he could locate exact areas of the brain that control specific faculties such as character traits, talent and intellectual inclination (Lane 2008:228). According to Gall, a person's character is revealed by the proportions of the skull (Van Wyhe 2004:213). These areas cover the twenty seven faculties of the mind (Van Wyhe 2004:213). He believed that the protrusions of these faculties could be read in a diagnostic manner to determine their corresponding character trait. Henry C Lavery, a contemporary of Gall, invented the psychograph machine in 1905, which was manufactured in 1931. This machine supposedly disclosed the thoughts of the person under examination. This practice became so popular that he even opened the 'Psychograph Company' (1929-1937) in Minneapolis together with Frank White (Reevy, Ozer & Ito 2010:439). Lavery's machine consists of a skullcap and probes. It sent low voltage impulses to

create a map of the sitter's skull. The map would be compared to a chart of character traits and hidden character traits can be accessed in this manner (McCoy 2015 [sp]).

Figure 24: [Author's description of image].
(Fowler & Wells' mapped cranium), 1848.
(Phrenology 2016).

Phrenology became commercially viable and the phrenological publishing house, 'Fowlers & Wells' was opened in New York City by Orson Squire Fowler, Lorenzo Niles Fowler, Samuel Welz and Nelso Sizer (Reevy, Ozer & Ito 2010:439). Lorenzo Fowler's *Phrenology head*, a three dimensional china head that maps human faculties, was used in consultations on matters ranging from marriage to decision making. Phrenology was fashionable from the 1820's to the 1840's (Reevy *et al* 2010:439).

The 'scientific' discourse of likeness was popularised, by Johann Caspar Lavater twelve years before the invention of Lavery's psychograph.[10] The new idea of likeness is evident in Lavater's (1853:1xxxi) writings:

[10] Lavater's *Essays on Physiognomy* (1853) suffered immense ridicule when the masses discontinued their belief in his theories. The British Phrenological Society was formally dissolved only in 1967, but its influence extends well into the twentieth century. Lavater's view on portraiture is discussed by several authors including Brilliant (1991:35) and John Gage (1997:121).

> I had occasionally drawn portraits, and had observed particularly striking resemblances between corresponding parts and features of the countenance of different persons; as, for example, similar noses distinguished by particular acuteness.

Lavater mentions portraiture several times in his *Essays on Physiognomy* (1853), which contains a section 'On portrait painting'. Lavater (1853:171) emphasises the importance of likeness in the portrait as a means to preserve the sitter's image. According to Lavater, the portrait ought to depict a complete summary of the individual and provide insight into character. Phrenology added to conventional likeness a static inventory of character traits. Insight into character can be gained by comparing physical features to this inventory. The phrenologists therefore relied heavily on the notion of 'type'. The metaphysics of presence here becomes located in physiognomic likeness. Idiosyncratic character traits almost became impossible due to the belief in character types.

An example of this logic is the theories of Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), the infamous progenitor of eugenics. Galton (2004:6) developed a system of taxonomy of "really representative faces" by means of a method of composite photography.[11] This method is outlined in his *Inquiries into human faculty and its development* (1883) which contains the section on 'Composite portraits' (Galton 2004:6).[12] Galton wanted to gain insight into character types of individuals through examining their facial features. Unlike traditional portrait likeness that depicted the sitter's unique identity, Galton wanted to establish universal character types. A type according to Galton, is evident when the sitter's character corresponds with his or her features. Galton was a proponent of the notion of essence. He also believed that character types are hereditary. In this regard, Galton (1994:10-11) states that: "[i]t is unhappily a fact that fairly distinct types of criminals breeding true to their kind have become established, and are one of the saddest disfigurements of modern civilisation". Galton thus established the idea that there is a 'universal face' for every character. Regarding the criminal type, Galton (2004:11) states that "[t]he individual faces ... are villainous in

[11] The aim of these composites is "... to obtain a truer likeness [...]. Every artist makes mistakes; but by combining the conscientious works of many artists, their separate mistakes disappear, and what is common to all of their work remains" (Galton 2004:8). Galton (2004:vii) asserts that his book "... became the starting-point of that recent movement in favour of National Eugenics...".

[12] Some of the categories established by Galton (2004:9) in this section include family resemblance, "health, disease, criminality, consumption and other maladies".

different ways, and when they are combined, the individual peculiarities disappear, and the common humanity of a low type is all that is left". His methodology was to take dozens of photographs of individuals who represented specific groups he wanted to identify. He would then superimpose the photographic negatives before taking another final photograph of the composite result. This composite would be the portrait of the shared countenance of a certain type, class, or family. The classification of an individual as part of a group, based on the comparison with a type was made possible by Galton's invention of composite photography (Gage 1997:123).

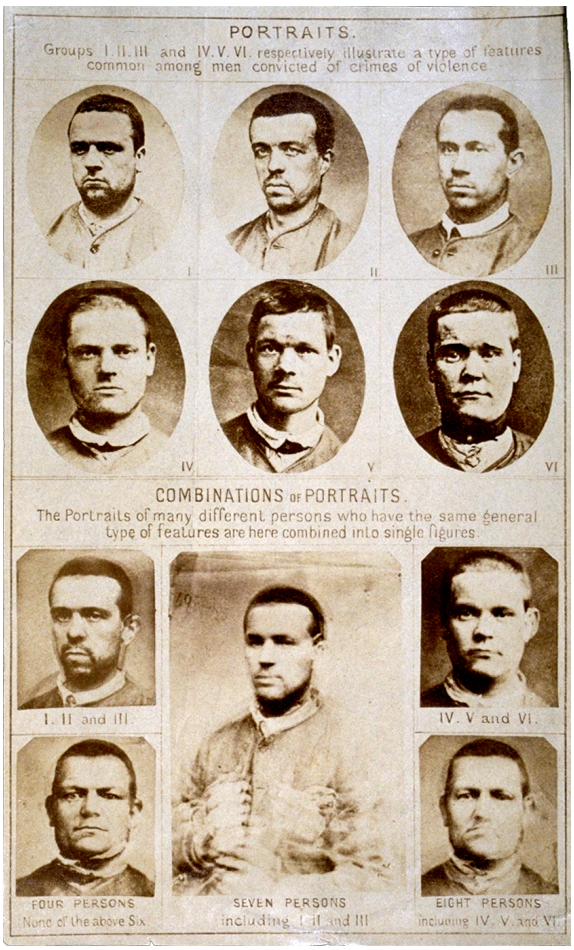

Figure 25: Francis Galton, *Composite portraits showing features common among men convicted of crimes of violence,* circa 1885. University College, London.
(Eugenics Archive [sa]).

Galton's photographs were "perhaps *the* earliest attempt" to employ the photograph in relation to "a wholly new conception of 'likeness'" (Gage 1997:123). This new definition of likeness precipitated the judging of character in order to exert social

control (Gage 1997:123). The essentialism inherent in Galton's theories inadvertently influenced the apartheid practice of racial typing. The doctrine of 'essence preceding existence' is evident in Galton (2004:30) view that "[t]he world is beginning to awaken to the fact that the life of the individual is in some real sense a prolongation of those of his ancestry". Physiognomy thus provided a 'scientific' basis for racism. Galton's influence is seen when people are viewed as 'composites' of their 'race'. Essentially, what Galton proposes is the practice of stereotyping. Stereotyping occurs when individuals are 'typed' into homogenous groups. This kind of classification has an Otherising effect on people's identities. Pratt (1986:139) reiterates this view by stating that Othering takes place when people are "homogenised into a collective 'they', which is distilled even further into an iconic 'he' [...]. This abstracted 'he'/'they' is the subject of verbs in a timeless present tense, which characterises anything 'he' is or does not as a particular historical event but as an instance of a pre-given custom or trait".[13] The individual's nature is viewed as a universal and unchanging trait of the 'race' in question.[14] Galton was a staunch believer in this static essentialism, which also provided the basis for his eugenics. He (2004:199) asserts that:

> [w]henever a low race is preserved under conditions of life that exact a high level of efficiency, it must be subjected to rigorous selection. The few best specimens of that race can alone be allowed to become parents, and not many of their descendants can be allowed to live.

However, Galton was not alone in his observations. According to Keith Breckenridge (2014:35), it was French criminologist, Alphonse Bertillon (1853-1914) who first invented an anthropometric system for the identification of criminals. This system was also employed during apartheid to capture people's 'presence'. Bertillon gathered bodily statistics (measurements) to identify people until this method was superseded by his invention of the fingerprint. As discussed already, 'black' people were compelled to present their fingerprints on the Identity Card required by the Population Registration Act. Bertillon has built "a tool to follow the criminal 'across time' by indexing the body itself" (Breckenridge 2014:35). Bertillonage, in the 1890's became

[13] Edward Said (1994:60) asserts that labels are mediated through an ideology that masks the real person. Labels do not describe the actual reality of a person, and often have "has no ontological stability" (Said 1994:xvii).

[14] According to Galton (2004), "[t]he most merciful form of what I ventured to call 'eugenics' would consist in watching for the indications of superior strains or races, and in so favouring them that their progeny shall outnumber and gradually replace that of the old one".

a method of criminal identification and provided the mechanism to classify the body by means of phrenology (2014:35). Aspects of Bertillonage is evident in the work of Gustav Theodor Fritsch, who measured the skulls of native South Africans in his book *Die Eingeboren Süd Afrika's: Ethnographisch und anatomisch beschrieben* (1872). Fritsch's anthropological observations, as documented by Keith Dietrich and Andrew Bank, are not as scientifically founded as they are ideologically inspired. It nevertheless contributed to the discourse of race in South Africa.

A theorist directly linked to the understanding of 'race' in South Africa is French aristocrat and anthropologist Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau (1816-1882). He was instrumental in the development of racial anthropology and scientific racism. His *Essay on the inequality of the human races* (1853) discusses the 'unbridgeable' difference between racial types. The notion of the Aryan 'race' as the pinnacle of humanity derives from this text. Joachim C Fest (2002), who wrote a biography of Hitler, credits De Gobineau as the main influence on Nazism. Fest (2002:210-211) asserts that "[...] Hitler simplified De Gobineau's elaborate doctrine until it became demagogically usable [...]". Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in in 1933, and the Nazi movement and ideology had a great influence on the Daniel Malan's Gesuiverde Nasionale Party, formed in 1934, with the aid of the Broederbond (Clark & Worger 2013:30).[15] De Gobineau (1853:204) postulated that racial mixing will destroy civilisation. This view is echoed in the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act no. 55 of 1949, which prohibited the mixing of 'white' and 'non-white' people during apartheid. The Act states that its aim is to "prohibit marriages between Europeans and non-Europeans [...]" (Prohibition of Mixed Marriages, 1949 2016).

De Gobineau not only influenced South African racial views during apartheid, he directly discussed the physique of Saartjie Baartman (1789-1815), a Khoisan woman from the Eastern Cape.[16] She was dubbed the 'Hottentot Venus', due to her

[15] Several authors note the influence of Nazi Germany on Afrikaner nationalism, including Claudia Bathsheba Braude (2001:xxxiv). Vandenbosh (2015:98 &99) highlights the military aid provided to Hitler during WWII, in the form of information on enemy presence in the Cape, and "[m]any Afrikaners fell under the spell of Hitler's national socialism". Tiffany Fawn Jones (2012:2) highlights the comparison between South Africa, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany with reference to mistreatment of patients during apartheid.

[16] The extensive literature on Saartjie Baartman includes Rachel Holmes' (2008) biography *The Hottentot Venus: The life and death of Saartjie Baartman: Born 1789 – Buried 2002*. As highlighted by Sadiah Qureshi (2004:233), discussions on Saartjie Baartman often present gender and racial perspectives. For example, Clifton C Crais and Pamela Scully's *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: a ghost story and a biography* (2009) and Deborah Willis' (2004:233) "Black Venus 2010:

'unusual' physiognomy. She was lured to Europe in 1810 by Alexander Dunlop, a dealer in show animals. Her travels to Europe and subsequent exhibition in ethnological exhibitions happened during the nineteenth century, when physiognomic and phrenological practices were dominant. De Gobineau's observed that Baartman was a "fifth category of human, a *Homo sapiens monstrous*" (Crais & Scully 2009:2). Her physiognomy was the focus De Gobineau's *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853), in which he draws a comparison between Baartman and the ape. He states that "[t]here is no vast difference between the intelligence of a *Bosjesman* and that of an oran-ùtan, and that the difference is far greater between Descartes or Homer and the Hottentot than between the stupid Hottentot and the ape" (Crais & Scully 2009:2). This view is echoed by French anthropologist Julien-Joseph Virey (1775-1846), who states that Baartman's physiognomy is characterised by a "hideous form" and "horribly flattened nose" (Gilman 1985a:85). Virey (Firmin & Charles 2002:xxiii) postulated that 'black' and 'white' people belonged to different species. These views are arguably still maintained (in some circles) in South Africa. Derogatory past stereotypes are applied in the present in relation to people's character. An example is the Facebook post regarding 'black' people on beaches by the estate agent Penny Sparrow. Sparrow (infamously) asserted that: "these monkeys [...] are allowed to be released on New year's Eve" and "[f]rom now I. [*sic*] Shall address the blacks of South Africa as monkeys as I see the cute little wild monkeys do the same pick drop and litter" (Penny Sparrow's racist Facebook post trends on Twitter 2016). This post arguably prompted a host of others in which people across the racial spectrum reverted to stereotypical racial mudslinging.

They called her 'Hottentot" recounts Baartman's narrative. Qureshi's *Displaying Sara Baartman, the 'Hottentot Venus'* (2004) investigates the politics and effects of Baartman's exhibition and objectification. Baartman is often discussed in relation to feminist themes. For example, Sander Gilman discusses Baartman in relation to sexuality. She is the subject of various contemporary artworks, for example, paintings by Penny Siopis. Two movies were made about her *Vénus noire* (2009) by Abdellatif Kechiche and Zola Maseko's *The life and times of Sara Baartman* (1998). Sander L Gilman discusses Baartman in relation to Otherisation, deviancy and the antithesis of European beauty and sexual customs in the chapter 'Black bodies, white bodies: Toward an iconography of female sexuality in late nineteenth-century art, medicine, and literature', in *'Race', writing, and difference.*

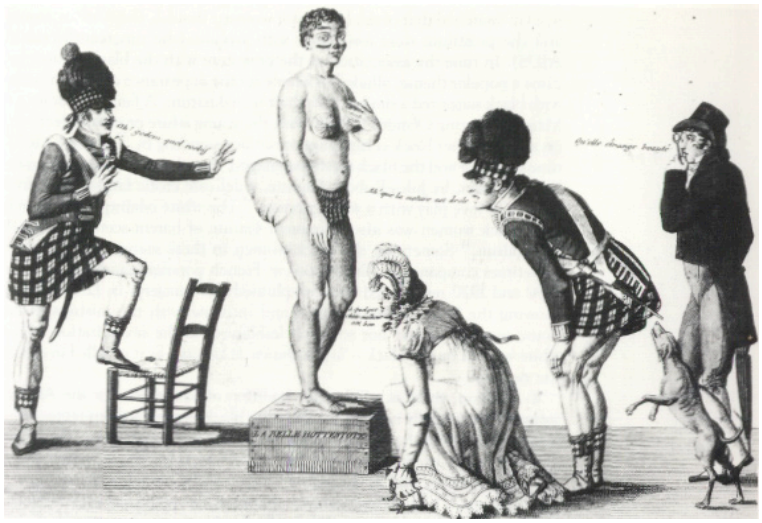

Figure 26: *La Belle Hottentot*, 19th century.
French print.
(Davie 2014).

Baartman's physiognomic features were subjected to the colonial gaze during her stay in Europe. Her body was dissected and subjected to the anthropological and medical gaze of Georges Cuvier (1769-1832), French zoologist and father of palaeontology. Cuvier's book *Le Règne Animal distribuè d'après son organisation* (1829) reiterated the hierarchical view of 'race' by arguing that although it seems as if all human beings belong to a singular species due to the ability to 'interbreed', they do not. According to Cuvier human beings can be divided into distinct 'races' based on hereditary external characteristics.[17] The negative physiognomic portrayal is evident in his statement that "[t]he projecting muzzle and thick lips evidently approximate it to the Apes: the hordes of which is composed have always continued barbarous" (Levitt 2015:303).[18]

[17] We know that the apartheid racial categories is a fallacy.[17] As Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1986:4) points out, "[r]ace, as a meaningful criterion within the biological sciences, has long been recognised to be a fiction". Designators such as 'the white race or 'the black race' are metaphors and "biological misnomers (Gates 1986:4). Henry Louis Gates, Jr (1986:5) reiterates that "race is not an objective term for classification ... it is a dangerous trope" instead. For this reason, he brackets the word, in acknowledgment that it does not point to an essence (1986:402). These metaphorical racial categories were nevertheless replicated in the segregation of geographical spaces. For example The Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act (National States Citizenship Act) No 26 of 1970, meant that 'blacks' were not regarded as South African nationals, but citizens of their appointed homeland (Apartheid Legislation 1850s-1970's 2015). Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1986:5) highlights, "race is the ultimate trope of difference because it is so very arbitrary in its application" and it is often driven by economic interests.

[18] Preceding these views by 50 years, Sir John Barrow provided an ethnographic portrait of the bushman (Pratt 1986:139). Barrow's *An account of the travels into the interior of South Africa* (1801) includes the chapter "Sketches on a journey into the country of the Bosjesmans". Barrow was British secretary to George Macartney and mediator between Boer settlers and indigenous groups, when the British annexed the Dutch Cape Colony 1795 (Pratt 1986:161). According to Pratt (1986:139),

This view is uncannily similar to Sparrow's post mentioned earlier. The lasting impression of physiognomy is still evident today. The derogatory comparison between with the ape is naturalised due to its historical reiteration. Another example from 'science' is Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895), also known as "Darwin's bulldog", who believed that African people are the 'missing link' between apes and "civilised (white) mankind" (Brantlinger 1986:203).[19]

It is important to note the racial discourse of the time was formed by physical anthropology and (pseudo)science. It was also echoed in religious discourse.[20] In South Africa, Biblical 'proof' for example, of Afrikaner exclusivity helped shape Afrikaner identity (Stichele & Pyper 2012:80). Derrida (1986:335) points to the "theologico-political discourse of *apartheid*". He refers specifically to the charter of the Institute for National Christian Education (1948) which states that: "[f]or each people and each nation is attached to its own native soil which has been allotted to it by the Creator ... God wanted nations and peoples to be separate [...]" (Derrida 1986:335). The geographical segregation of apartheid is thus Biblically 'justified'. The belief in polygenesis, or the view that different 'races' have separate origins, is upheld by de Gobineau's (1853:116) *The inequality of the human races.* The chapter 'Racial differences are permanent' declares that Adam is the progenitor of the 'white' 'race' of which 'non-whites' are not part. The discourse of race is thus founded on various disciplines that reiterate a similar view. In this regard, Derrida (1986:364) states that

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Barrow's portrait focuses on the body and his portrait is rather a 'bodyscape'. Pratt (1986:143) points out that the subject of Barrow's portrait of South Africa was the landscape, not its people. People left traces on "the face of the country". The 'speaking self' is also effaced in order for the landscape to present itself. This was typical of travel writing of the time (Pratt 1986:142), including the writing of Livingstone.

[19] According to Patrick Brantlinger, from the 1860's, Darwinism bolstered the development of physical anthropology, or the belief in the essential difference between 'races' (Brantlinger 1986:201). Darwinism, according to Brantlinger (1986:206) lent scientific gravitas to hierarchical views of race and the view that some 'races' are progressive and some not. 'Lower races', should therefore be ruled by 'superior' and 'civilised races', and should eventually be replaced by 'civilised races'.

[20] As mentioned already, the discourse of race derives from a web of sources including the 'scientific', the Biblical, and also fiction. Patrick Brantlinger (1986:197 &207) highlights the influence of fiction on the Victorian imagination. Adventure fiction portray Africans as either amusing or dangerous. Examples are fictional explorer tales including Samuel White Baker's (1821-1893) *Cast up by the sea* (1869), Henry Morton Stanley's *My Kalulu: Prince, king, and slave* (1874), Edward FitzGerald's translation of the poem *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1809-1883) and Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* (1879). Stanley's fictional narrative highlights the horrors of the African slave trade (by themselves). Missionaries portrayed Africans as inferior and weak, in need of being enlightened (Brantlinger 1986:197). Pratt (1986:160) points out that travel writing "fixed [a] set of differences that normalised Self and Other in fixed ways".

"the history of *apartheid* (its 'discourse' and its 'reality', the totality of its *text*) would have been impossible, unthinkable without the European concept and the European history of the state, without the European discourse on race – its scientific pseudoconcept and its religious roots, without Judeo-Christian ideology, and so forth".

An example of anthropological portraits that directly relate to the politics of likeness in South Africa, is the collection of photographs of indigenous South Africans by Gustav Theodor Fritsch. Fritsch wrote *The natives of South Africa ethnographically and anatomically described* (1872) two decades after De Gobineau *The inequality of the human races* appeared. Fritsch portrays 'black' people and Orientals as Others, different from the European Self (Dietrich 2008:15). Fritsch pioneered the anthropological function of the photograph (Dietrich 2008:118) and as a founding member of the Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory (1869), he set out to compile a portfolio of racial types (Dietrich 2008:16). The model of humanity that he believed in was based on the classical canon of Polyclitus. His work exemplifies Mirzoeff's notion of visuality mentioned earlier, since his work names, categorises and defines racial groups. Fritsch arguably portrays the Other in order to obtain a clearer image of the European Self. In this regard Fritsch states that "[i]t is of no use to see the odd example of foreign races in nature or in photographs because one cannot discern the unusual or deviant as long as we do not know what we ourselves look like" (Dietrich 2008:15).

Figure 27: Polykleitos, *Doryphoros*, circa 440 BCE.
Marble sculpture, 2.12 metres.
Naples National Archaeological Museum, Naples.
(Classical Body [sa]).

The notion of white superiority, which is central to the ideas discussed thus far, is also maintained by Fritsch. He regards the 'white' body that conforms to the canon of Polykleitos (5th century BC), as the benchmark to which 'non-white' 'races' are compared.[21] The comparative bodily measurements supposedly provided proof that the Aryan 'race' (or the "normal civilised man") was 'superior', and 'non-Europeans' (wild tribes) were 'inferior' (Lewerentz 2008:154).

According to Dubow (1995:114-115) this "[...] typological method is at the heart of physical anthropology. It was based on empirical principles of classification

[21] The sculpture *Doryphoros* (spear-bearer) is regarded as the paragon of Classical Greek sculpture. It exemplifies ideal proportions that are in perfect numeric harmony. Polykleitos described his proportions in a treatise entitled 'Canon'. *Doryphoros* is regarded as the apex of Greek art and the culmination of artistic development from the kouros to the *Riace Warrior* (Tansey & Kleiner 1996:145-147). By analogy then, the 'white' male whose body conforms to the canon is the apex of humanity.

taxonomy originally developed in the natural sciences. The conception of 'race' as 'type' encouraged a belief in the existence of ideal categories and stressed diversity and difference over similarity and convergence. This was overlaid by binary-based notions of superiority and inferiority, progress and degeneration".

Fritsch documented the racial hierarchy in North Africa and at the top of the hierarchy is the Levantine, the Arabic type and ends with the "Negroid racial type" (Dietrich 2008:15).[22] His ethnic portraits of Xhosa, Zulu and Damara peoples are published in *Die Eingeboren* (Dietrich 2008:116). The anthropological portrait conventions also used by Fritsch, frames the sitter in a manner that Otherises them. These conventions include similar head sizes, similar poses and the positioning of sitters in a fixed distance from the camera. The sitters' eyes ought to focus on the camera and their faces ought to be level with the camera (Bank 2008:15). True to the anthropological tradition, sitters are often naked in order to display physiognomic characteristics (Dietrich 2008:19), which often included cranial and anatomical measurements (Godby 2008:129). As mentioned already, the above racial taxonomy is characteristic of the zeitgeist of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and form part of European portrait conventions of the Other (Godby 2008:126). Fritsch's journey to South Africa can therefore be viewed in the context of European comparative studies of "Kaffirs, Hottentots and Bushmen", who are believed to embody different evolutionary stages (Godby 2008:124).

Two type of portraits of South African natives that Fritsch documented are relevant in order to exemplify the ideological politics of likeness. The 'honorific', which stresses the sitter's humanity, and the 'repressive' which presents the sitter in an anthropological context, belonging to a 'type' (Bank 2008:134).

3.2.1 Honorific portraits

Unlike repressive portraits, the honorific type emphasises the sitter's humanity and focus is on facial features. (Bank 2008:135). Missionaries are often portrayed in this way, and it could be argued that the European portrait convention is followed when

[22] In *Atlas*, Fritsch provides a hierarchical topology of tribes that start with the Zulu, proceeding downwards ere to the Ndebele to the Xhosa, and Sotho-Tswana. His racist views are evident when he asserts that "[t]he Khoikhoin sequence began with the (colonial) 'Hottentots' and proceeded via the 'Korana' down to the lowly 'Bushman'" (Bank 2008:141).

the native is 'civilised'. Unlike the repressive portrait, the portrait below of Johannes Nakin shows emotion, which facialises him as *human*.

Figure 28: Gustav Theodor Fritsch, *Johannes Nakin, Sotho teacher at mission school*, circa 1865.
(Bank & Dietrich 2008:36).

His 'humanity' is supported by his Western clothing, such the waistcoat and the cravat belonging to the European gentleman (Bank 2008:136). In this regard, Fritsch mentioned his "excelled in intellect", that is arguably due to his "civilised" upbringing (Bank 2008:136). The portrait of Johannes Nakin reflects David Livingstone's view that the African can be civilised through Christianity, and saved from 'darkness' (Brantlinger 1986:197). However, the supposed savagery of the African is so ingrained that "these wild African fetissists [sic] are [not] easily converted to a 'purer creed' (Burton cf Brantlinger 1986:198). Brantlinger (1986:214-215) highlights that the image of the African savage is in fact, a portrait of the 'civilised' Victorian, whose own "savagery" is very close to the surface, and the possibility of "going native" is ever present.[23] Europeans dispelled these undesirable elements onto Africans (Brantlinger 1986:215), by means of the portrait.

[23] As highlighted by Brantlinger (1986:215), Dominique Mannoni asserts that "the savage ... is identified in the unconscious with a certain image of the instincts ... And civilised man is painfully divided between the desire to 'correct' the 'errors' of the savages and the desire to identify himself with them in his search for some lost paradise...".

3.2.2 Repressive portraits

Repressive portraits are often shaped by nationalistic sentiments (Bank 2008:139) and it could be argued that racial portraits during apartheid follow a similar repressive logic. In order to establish the Self as superior, a visuality of an inferior Other needs to be established. Repressive portraits are typical of anthropological investigations of the "native type" (Bank 2008:138). Repressive portraits emphasise physiognomic features, such as the "aberrant" evolution of the nose and lips, skin colour, skeletal structures and cranial aspects (Bank 2008:140 &142). Fritsch's portrait (Figure 29) below, is an example of this type of portraiture. The element of Othering is evident in Fritsch statement that "[a] national peculiarity which strikes one when viewing the portraits is the artistically formed hairstyles, the bizarre form of which contributes to the wild expressions of the faces" (Fritsch quoted in Dietrich & Bank 2008:76). Hair becomes a marker of Otherness: the woolly (associated with the 'low races') versus smooth hair (of the 'higher races') becomes entangled in the Manichean allegory and laden with the racial binary value system, which "legitimated social hierarchies and valuations" (Hagner 2008:164). Ernst Haeckel drew affinities between woolly hair and animals; if non-Europeans have woolly hair, it proves their proximity to apes (Hagner 2008:164).

Figure 29: Gustav Theodore Fritsch, *Ungeke, Zulu, Durban, Natal*, 1864. Photograph.
(Dietrich & Bank 2008:78).

The above portrait portrays the African savage. The extreme form of this stereotype is that of the cannibal, as expressed in *Savage Africa* (1863) by Winwood Reade, to which the chapter 'The philosophy of cannibalism' belong (Brantlinger 1986:203). It is interesting to note that there is only one year difference between this publication and the above portrait (Figure 29) by Fritsch. The ethnographic portraits discussed in this section differs from European studio portraits of the same period (mid-nineteenth century) because they map racial traits and practices instead of individual ones. They summarise a 'race', not a person.

Van Wyhe (2004:6) asserts that the problem with phrenology (and by extension, ethnographic portraits) is that the homogeneity of marginalised groups are overemphasised for political and ideological reasons. The scientific use of anthropological portraits waned around 1880, when its limitations in capturing ethnic types were realised (Broeckman 2008:151). In terms of traditional portraiture, the pursuit of emphasising physiognomic likeness was replaced by the portrayal of psychological depth in the early 1900's when psychoanalysis became influential (Freemantle 2014:15). In South Africa, this practice of portraying psychological depth had to wait until the end of apartheid to be applied in full. The following section discusses the political portrait of apartheid South Africa, which is arguably a continuation of the anthropological views discussed in this section.

3.3 A political portrait of apartheid South Africa

The apartheid racial taxonomy was not created in a vacuum, but results from the international discourse on race. The politics of likeness, which has a well developed international trajectory, was formalised in South Africa in 1948 when apartheid was instituted. The politics of likeness that commenced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the anthropological portrait became crystallised and institutionalised in various apartheid Acts of the 1940s and 1950s. Apartheid portraits are characterised by Mirzoeff's (2011) notion of visuality, which establishes the politics of portrait identification. The population registration was a cornerstone of the apartheid state identification (Breckenridge 2014:168). This section discuss the manner in which the apartheid portrait created a visuality of the Other. Visuality presents, according to Mirzoeff (2011:3), authority as self evident. The political portrait, through visuality, therefore naturalises the apartheid state's authority. The apartheid state could arguably be regarded as a person, who needs an Other to maintain its identity. The portrait of

the state is captured in the Population Registration Act of 1950. This Act provides a racial taxonomy of different 'races' within South Africa. This racial taxonomy create an 'iconic diaspora', which is mirrored in the geographical diaspora of separate development and forced relocations.[24] An iconic diaspora is created since the self is displaced from its own image – it is unable to identify with the apartheid portrayal.

Apartheid visuality differs from the nineteenth-century practices discussed in the previous section, because two systems were vital for the apartheid visuality and the politics of likeness, namely the population register and the pass system. The registration of the population was the foundation of apartheid, the Group Areas Act and the pass system (Breckenridge 2014:168). The Population Registration Act required South Africans to obtain a formal racial classification, an identity number and to register their physical addresses (Breckenridge 2014:168). [25] The anthropological views of theorists such as Lavater, Galton, and Gall, as well as other similar theorists, arguably manifest in the series of apartheid acts, that propagate segregation. Although the state painted a racial portrait of South Africans on the basis of fixed racial 'essence', 'race' was actually an artificial construct that the state tried to naturalise. In this regard, William John Thomas Mitchell (1942-) (2012:16) points out that "[r]ace in this framework emerges as a reality that is constructed [...] out of words and images, the sayable and the seeable, discourse and concrete things...". The social construction of 'race' is evident in the idea that many 'white' people have 'black' ancestors, a fact that the apartheid government was aware of, but nevertheless tried to ignore (Breckenridge 2014:228). The population register solved this problem of dubious white descent by generating racial categories and by allocating people into these categories based on their outer appearance (Breckenridge 2014:170). Therefore, racial types were created, and naturalised by means of the population register.

[24] Moyo Okediji's (cf Mirzoeff 2000:148) notion of 'virtual diasporation' is discussed later in this section with regards to bureaucratic portraiture.

[25] The politics of likeness depends on the technologies of likeness, such as the IBM computer's ability to capture data of the population during apartheid. Breckenridge (2014:172) describes the process of apartheid surveillance in an Orwellian manner and highlights the magnitude of this project: "a thirty-story monolith, called Civitas", was built at the cost of R10 million. A room in the basement housed the IBM computer. The project was staffed with more than 500 clerks and data processors working in the main office and an additional staff complement of one hundred people worked in the Cape Town and Johannesburg offices respectively. Fifty workers were located in Durban. They focussed exclusively on capturing data of the population in the register (Breckenridge 2014:234).

The following section argues that the apartheid state was regarded as a person with a distinct personality and individual agency. The apartheid state-as-person drew up its own portrait and captured its reflection in those of its people during the years of apartheid (1948-1994).

3.3.1 The apartheid state-as-a-person

It would be apt to mention the analogy of the Bildungsroman in relation to the state, especially since it is argued that the state is a person. Such a discussion could trace its development from its conception and infancy to its totalitarian mature character. It would arguably paint a picture of the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in 1652 in the Cape and discuss the various encounters between different groups. This discussion would describe the historical development of racial depiction in South Africa which culminated in the "mature" nationalistic state of 1948.[26] However, the aim here is not to provide a historical overview of the formation of the apartheid state, but to argue that it was endowed with personal characteristics and that it became a person of sorts. The idea that the state is an autonomous person with its own personality is supported by English philosopher and proponent of absolute monarchy, Thomas Hobbes' (1588 -1679) text *Leviathan* (1651).[27] The name that Hobbes assigns to this state-person is the 'Leviathan'. In the chapter 'The children of a commonwealth colonies', Hobbes refers to the person as replicating (imitating) itself by creating offspring (colonies) in his (the state's) own image. Hobbes refers to possible "birth defects" ("defectuous procreation") of the Leviathan, which includes the debilitating lack of sovereign power. He argues that the state shares a physical and a political body with his subjects.

Political philosopher Arnold Wolfers (1962:[sp]), shares Hobbes' view of the state-as-person. His chapter 'The actors of international politics' (1959) can be seen as the contemporary view of the idea that the state is a person (Oprisko & Kaliher 2014:32). Wolfers (1962:[sp]) asserts that the "state-as-the-sole-actors approach" could be seen as the traditional view, since it has been deep rooted after the

[26] Jan van Riebeeck from the Dutch East India Company (VOC), departed from the Netherlands and arrived in the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa on the ship the Dromedaris in 1652. The aim of this journey was to establish a halfway station to supply the Company's passing ships with refreshments such as food and medical assistance. Van Riebeeck's arrival marks the advent of the permanent European presence in South Africa (The arrival of Jan van Riebeeck in the Cape – 6 April 1652: 2016).

[27] I am indebted to Breckenridge (2014:2), for highlighting the notion of the state-as-person.

Napoleonic Wars, when the images of sovereign kings were replaced with that of the nation-states, or European super powers. Wolfers (1962:10) asserts that "[i]f state behaviour is to be intelligible and to any degree predictable, states must be assumed to possess psychological traits of the kind known to the observer through introspection and acquaintance with other human beings". Wolfers (1962:10) discusses scenarios in which states could be seen as persons with psychological characteristics who are capable of conducting introspection and forming relationships with people. He concludes that "the closer nations are drawn to the pole of complete compulsion, the more they can be expected to conform in their behaviour and to act in a way that corresponds to the deductions made from the states-as-actors model".

For Alexander Wendt (2004:291) the state is more than a social person; it is a biological person, capable of emulating a biological organism. It is evident that mimesis plays a role in the idea that the person is a state: the state emulates the characteristics of a person, and portrays himself in state-portraits, which in turn, must be emulated by its citizens. This anthropomorphic state-person have human traits, such as interests, identities, beliefs and so forth (Wendt 2004:291).[28] The beliefs of the apartheid state were internalised by its citizens, and its nationalistic identity was emulated. This identification split during the resistance to apartheid. It is interesting to note the similarities between the portrait itself and the theory of state-as-person and both are arguably distinctive European phenomena. Both the portrait and the notion of the state are modern ideas, which manifested in the rise of humanism. The power of the portrait to mirror the nationalist state is evident in the creation of the National Portrait Gallery in London, which aimed to bolster ideas of nationalism in England during the Victorian period (Barlow 1997:226-227).

As mentioned already, the notion that the state is a person is "explicitly Eurocentric" because it follows the logic of personhood in its need to define what is 'inside' and what is 'outside' (Wendt 2004:34). The state thus needs an Other ('non-white' people) against which his personhood ('white' people) is defined. The

[28] Oprisko and Kaliher (2014:31) argue that "the state is a social person with a distinct yet fluid personality but that it is not a biological person because, unlike living beings, a state can exist indefinitely as an idea and can be resurrected long after it has died ...". The view that the state is not a biological person (Oprisko & Kahiler 2014:32) enjoys a lot of support, from proponents such as Colin Wright. Wright (2004:273) agrees with Wendt that the state is real, but disagrees with the agency he bequeaths onto the state – which is essentially the criteria for portraying the state as a person. Erik Ringmar (2010:4) argues against the state-as-person theory and asserts that: "[s]tates clearly are not persons. States can be compared to persons to be sure, but that does not make them into persons. Most obviously, a state has no unified consciousness, no single memory, and no subjective will".

Self/Other dualism is replicated in the geographical segregation, which defined the state in spatial terms against the Bantustates, which became its geographic 'Other'. The idea that the state-as-person has a geographical Other is affirmed by Schmitt (cf Oprisko 2014:34) who asserts that 'inside' is the state, or the people that it consist of, and 'outside' is whatever is external to the state. "that which is external to it, such as other states". The basic dichotomy here is a political one of 'us' versus 'them', or simply, me' versus 'you' (Schmitt cf Oprisko 2014:34).

Psychological as well as geographical boundaries thus secured the identity of the Self. This is also perhaps why people are able to distance themselves from apartheid ideology; the state-as-a-person had agency and people were but mere reflections of its image. This view echoes Hegel's conception of history as having agency and people are mere actors who act out its will. In *Philosophy of right* (1820), Hegel (1991:374) states that "[s]ince history is the process whereby the spirit assumes the shape of events and of immediate natural actuality, the states of its development are present as immediate natural principles [...]. Hegel (Nisbet 2009:277) addresses German nationalism and equates the notion of the nation-state with spirit. He assigns absolute power to the nation-state, which is constituted of the people's (*volk's*) spirit. The self-consciousness of one particular nation is the vehicle for the development of the collective spirit" (Nisbet 2009:277; Hegel 1991:xxv;). According to Breckenridge (2014:2) the state-as-person has an unfettered justification for self-defence:

> The consequences of his recommendation of a new kind of mercilessly enforced political virtue, one that seeks only to defend the interests of the state – regardless of conventional morality – can be seen in our own time and in every generation before it; in this raison d'état, the state becomes a person with an unchecked prerogative for self-defence.

The state as sovereign agent reflects Descartes' autonomous subject who possesses agency and rights. In order to remain unified, external elements are viewed as threats that need to be banished. The first step towards safeguarding himself against the threat of the Other was the creation of the Population Registration Act of 1950.

3.3.2 Portrait of the state: The Population Registration Act

In 1950 the first minister of home affairs during apartheid, Eben Dönges instructed Jan Raats who was the Director of census, to embark on a project of racial classification (Breckenridge 2014). This practice was based on people's physiognomic

appearance (Breckenridge 2014). The Population Registration Act No 30 of 1950 made it compulsory for people to present themselves for classification into four sui generis racial groups: 'white', 'coloured', 'Bantu', and 'other'. The racial groups were defined as follows:

A "'white person' means a person who in appearance obviously is, or who is generally accepted as a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously a white person, is generally accepted as a coloured person" (Population Registration Act 1950:277). 'Black' people were defined as natives, which "means a person who in fact is or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa" (Population Registration Act 1950). A "coloured is a person who is not a white person or a native" (Population Registration 1950:277).

The category of 'non-White' people was subdivided further into the subgroups that included Griqua, Malya, Cape Coloureds, Other Coloureds, Indians, Chinese, and Other Asiatics, according to Section 5(5) of the Population Registration Act (Agarwal, Choudhary & Gupta 2014:274). The portraits discussed in Chapter Four undermine the basis for racial categorisation, by rejecting the notion of mimesis, which enables the identification and the replication of 'race'. Roger Ballen for example, exposes the nationalist notion of racial superiority as a fallacy in his portraits of poor and demented Afrikaners. He therefore refuses to mimic the apartheid state sanctioned identities in his portraits.

According to the Population Registration Act, the population register is compiled from the information gathered by the Census Act, 1910 (Act No. 2 of 1910). The state's aim of racial and ethnic classification is clear from the following paragraph quoted from the Act (1950:279):

> [e]very person whose name is included in the register shall be classified by the Director as a white person, a coloured person or a native, as the case may be, and every coloured person and every native whose name is so included shall be classified by the Director according to the ethnic or other group to which he belongs.

It is argued that the success of apartheid classification and subsequent segregation is due to the notion of 'visuality' that names, categorises and defines (Mirzoeff 2011:3). Underlying these practices however is the notion of 'seeing' physiognomic racial difference. The optic nature of the apartheid classification is evident in Bamford's (cf Bowker & Star 2000:208) clarification of the juridical meanings of 'appearance' of a

person and 'general acceptance' 'race'. Bamford (cf Bowker & Star 2000:208) notes that:

> Appearance is a matter of visual observation and assessment, to be undertaken by the tribunal. This observation and assessment should be made at the start of reclassification proceedings. If the subject is obviously white in appearance the presumption in section 19(1) will operate; if he is obviously not white, no further enquiry is necessary since he cannot be reclassified as white; and if he is neither obviously white nor non-white, the tribunal must proceed to decide on general acceptance.

Apartheid's nature is arguably catoptric because it relies on the mimetic mirroring of invented identities. Colonial discourse itself is mirrored in the apartheid Acts such as the Population Registration. Appearance and likeness became important aspects of the catoptric state, which relied on the mimetic correspondence between portrait and citizen. This is evident for example in statement 19 of the Population Registration act: "[a] person who in appearance obviously is a white person shall for the purposes of this Act be presumed to be a white person until the contrary is proved" (1950:293).

The catoptric state is governed by notion of visuality, since both terms aim to maintain the authority of the state by means of naming, categorising and defining. The catoptric apartheid state used visuality as a mechanism of control by prohibiting self-definition, based on volitional mimesis. The Act (1950) states that the Governor-General has the power to "define the ethnic or other groups into which coloured people and natives shall be classified...". An identity number was issued to all the names that appeared in the population register. With the exception of 'natives', people were sub-categorised by means of the following information: full name, sex and residence, "his classification in terms of section five"; date and place of birth; citizenship or nationality and marital status. A "recent photograph of himself", as well as an identity number (1950:281) were required. In addition to this information, the 'native' must also disclose the district "in which he is ordinarily resident". Furthermore, 'natives' had to disclose their "citizenship or nationality, the ethnic or other group and the tribe to which he belongs" (1950:281). This additional information – ethnicity, tribe and district – emphasises the perception that other categories are 'neutral', whereas the 'black' person is characterised by ethnicity.

It is interesting to note that this Act (1950:293) criminalises the possession of another person's identity card and the representation of it as one's own. It also

criminalises the person who "with intent to deceive, imitates, alters, defaces, destroys or mutilates any identity card".[29] In apartheid South Africa, no 'unauthorised' mimesis was permitted – the state completely controlled the process of mimetology.[30] Only state sanctioned identity types could be emulated. Citizens were prohibited from self-initiated spontaneous mimetology. The prohibition of mimesis arguably deprived the individual of agency. The mimetic 'offence' of creating one's own idiosyncratic identity and repudiating state representation could result in imprisonment.

Mimetology arguably aimed to establish the presence of an individual by narrowing the gap between the nationalist state portrayal of 'race' and the citizen. Therefore, a correspondence was established between the nationalist state portrait, the description of the person's behaviour (in the dompas) and the actual person. The dompas here has an uncanny resemblance to Carlyle's notion of the portrait as summary of the person. The Identity Card had to be carried by every adult South African at all times in order for their racial presence to be immediately verified against their portrait and recorded information (Aiken 2013:63).

3.3.3 Portraiture and the iconic diaspora: The dompas

The state 'portrait' of the 'black' South African was arrested in the despised dompas (Reference Book or Pass Book). The dompas portrayed the 'black' person according to apartheid state criteria. [31] The dompas ('Bewysboek' or 'Reference Book') refers to the 'stupid pass', a term used by Africans (Wood Gauld 2012:15). It became a portrait of the individual's 'essence'. The dompas captured the individual's photograph, fingerprints, employment records, address and location. It contained information regarding possible encounters with the police, government permission to access certain geographical locations, permission to seek work in certain areas, and

[29] During 1967-8, 517 Africans had to stand trial for offences with regards to the registration and production of documents (African Democracy Education Trust 2014:51).

[30] Interestingly, in post-apartheid South Africa, some forms of mimetology are also prohibited. For example 'white' people are not allowed to mimetically portray 'black' people. The so-called blackface practice, particularly popular amongst university students, will see them expelled. Mimetic practices are thus also controlled by the current government. According to the SRC vice chairperson at Stellenbosch University, at which a blackface incident took place in February 2016, "black facing dated back to the days of slavery, where 'black' people were fetishised and treated like animals on stage" (Petersen 2016).

[31] A protest against the pass laws took place in Sharpeville on 21 March 1960 and three days after the protest, the first state of emergency (30 March to 31 August) was declared, based on the 1953 Public Safety Act (South African Democracy Education Trust 2014:344).

employers' reports on behaviour and performance (Wood Gauld 2012:15). It is clear from the required information that the individual's agency is de-emphasised and that the individual was valued in his or her productive capacity as a labourer.

Figure 30: 1955 Apartheid era dompas, 1955.
Private Collection.
(Bidorbuy 2014).

It is therefore not surprising that many dompasses were burnt in protest, cremated like corpses.[32] The 'official' burning of pass books in 1960 was preceded by a march to the Orlando police station without passes, organised by the PAC on 21 March 1960 (Hain 2010:[sa]). This march coincided with the Sharpeville Massacre, an event during which ten thousand people surrounded the Sharpeville police station. It resulted in the deaths of 67 people. The ANC responded to this event by the public burning of pass books on 26 March 1960.

[32] In an attempt to locate an example of a dompas, I have asked various friends and acquaintances if they have one in their possession. Their dompasses have, however, been destroyed, arguably in a symbolic attempt exorcise apartheid definitions and to take ownership of one's own mimesis.

Figure 31: Nelson Mandela burning pass book in protest, 28 March 1960.
Photograph.
Apartheid Museum, Johannesburg.
(Bos 2016.).

Former president of the ANC, Albert John Luthuli's (1898-1967) dompas was burnt first (Hain 2010:[sa]). This event shook the foundations of the apartheid system (Hain [sa]), because the destruction of the colonial depictions that signify subjugation reflected an increase in power. The dompas was alienating, because subjects were unable to identify with their portrayal. The self is thus distanced from its own image. In this regard Nigerian art historian, artist and author, Moyosore Okediji (1956 -) (cf Mirzoeff 2000:148) states that:

> [t]the portrait duplicates the body and delegates the duplicate into a mythic Other, or metabody, that is frequently as important, and sometimes more relevant than the self. Colonial authorities have long realized that the portrait is as important as the portrayed body.

Okediji (cf Mirzoeff 2000:148) argues that the bureaucratic use of portraiture takes precedence over the referent, which is the physical body of the sitter. Bureaucratic representations include passport and Identity Document photographic portrait. Okediji (cf Mirzoeff 2000:148) states that "[i]t is not enough for me to present my body physically. I must prove that my body is really mine, that I am what I am, with the use

of these tiny portraits that corroborate my existence". He argues that documents like the passport mimetically splits the subject into two, because the subject cannot identify with the portrait. This split subject is then united by officials who identify the person with the portrait. He refers to this type of portrait as a 'pseudo-suicide' and a rebirth of the self by means of photographic mimesis. This mimetic process is a 'virtual diasporation', which is also the narrative "an apartheid-inspired tragicomedy". Regarding apartheid mimesis Okediji (cf Mirzoeff 2000:148) poignantly states that:

> […] my own mimesis, my passport photograph, begins to haunt, taunt and tease me, because at some point, it stopped miming me – the referent, the signified which is the real person, starts to imitate the passport photograph (in the official's look from passport to face, and back to the passport). I mime the photograph that is a mime of me, in a complex coding of relationships, of multiple mimesis, that begins to respect no centre as the ultimate point of origin or reference. Everything mythologizes itself as a portrait, an icon, thus I become a mere portrait, a mime of myself.

The South African 'black' subject thus becomes an involuntary mime of his or her portrait. The term 'diasporation' refers to the psychic distancing when the self is distanced from its representation. This 'spatial suicide' through colonial portraiture is often reflected in the portraits of people who already live in a diaspora. Therefore, they experience a situation of 'double diasporation' (Okediji cf Mirzoeff 2000:147-148). According to Okediji (cf Mirzoeff 2000:146) 'diasporation' also refers to the 'carnal departure' typical of the forced relocations of apartheid. It is important to note that iconic diasporation was paralleled by the geographical diasporation during apartheid. The segregated group portraits of the four 'races' of South Africa were superimposed onto the landscape, according to the Group Areas Act of 1950. This Act resulted in an indigenous dislocation, which forced 860 000 mostly coloured South Africans to relocate (James 2012 [sa]). Segregation is reflected in the apartheid city model that relegated 'black' and 'coloured' people to the city's outskirts, and retained the city centre as the commercial hub (Helen Suzman 2009). Some people were restricted to homelands and the 'interface' between them and the rest of South African 'races' was the pass/influx control system (South African Democracy Education Trust 2014:51).

It could be argued that the opposite of this totalitarian 'portrait' is the selfie, which is characterised by its democratic nature. This idea is explored in Chapter Six during the discussion of the participatory and methexist medium of the selfie.

3.4 Conclusion

Physiognomic portrayal was the focus of portraiture until psychoanalysis dispelled the idea that facial features can be indicative of character or personality (Gage 1997:119).[33] The racial types outlined in the South African Population Registration Act of 1950 could arguably be viewed as an extension of existing European views regarding 'race'. The apartheid racial typology is thus argued to derive from existing international discourses on 'race'. These discourses comprised of theories pertaining to physiognomy, phrenology and physical anthropology.[34]

The phrenology of Gall mapped the cranium with a corresponding chart of mental functions. Although obviously pseudoscientific, Gall's work is a precursor to psychology. Lavery's psychograph machine of 1905 claimed to reveal inner thoughts and mental attributes by the measuring the skull according to certain phrenological tenets. Lavater's physiognomic theories introduced the notion that likeness is bound to character type. Galton's composite portraits of the 1880's that portrayed character types helped reinforce the notion that essence is inherent in types. His psychometric inventions like the fingerprint became a tool for identifying 'racial' difference. Galton actually studied 'race' through the investigation of finger prints. According to him, fingerprints could be divided into groups, which corresponded to different 'races' (Cummins 1935:830). Most importantly, this is arguably the instance where likeness became biometrical. Biometric information, which is indexical nature, is still used today in conjunction with the iconic portrait. De Gobineau who was an early proponent of scientific racism, proposed the 'superiority' of the Aryan master 'race'. His theories had a great influence on Nazism. De Gobineau's colonial views regarding Baartman's physique were used as 'proof' of her racial inequality. Fritsch's anthropometric portraits of South African natives documented racial types (Broeckman 2008:144) and helped to establish the notion of racial hierarchy. According to this value scale, 'white races' were viewed as superior and 'black races' were deemed inferior. These studies reinforced European portraits as the benchmark

[33] Sigmund Freud published *The interpretation of dreams* in 1900. Pivotal psychoanalytic terms such as the conscious and the unconscious, the Oedipus complex, the notion of regression, condensation, and desire derives from this text. The implications of psychoanalysis on portraiture is arguably that character or motivation derives from personal experience and the unconscious motivation. The shift is therefore from the outer (bodily) to the inner (mental) realm.

[34] Field (2001:16) notes that during the1880's and 1890's, racial segregation became popular, influenced by theories of racial superiority.

of civilisation whereas all others were regarded as deviant. This racial portrait was perpetuated during apartheid era Identity books and pass books. The difference between the early colonial era and apartheid is that segregation based on these theories became institutionalised. A triad of identification consisting of portrait, racial type and racialised identity number identified Europeans during apartheid. The identification of non-Europeans was more complex. The passbook attempted to provide a complete 'portrait' of the 'native' person. This portrayal ranged from empirical data to compliance with the law and work ethic. This 'portrait' arguably provided the state with the subject's 'complete' presence.

According to Dubow (1995:114-115), the quest for racial purity and the division of human beings into types was unsuccessful because racial purity does not exists. Only hybridity does. A system of racial typology was nevertheless enforced during apartheid when portrait likeness became a political tool for racial segregation.[35] The catoptric apartheid regime was ultimately shattered by artists who resisted racial taxonomy and its underlying the Manichean binary value system. Their resistance involved anti-mimetic strategies. The portraits discussed in the following chapter foreground the rejection of mimetic portraits. Anti-mimetic strategies opposed the catoptric regime of representing 'reality' by means of veristic artistic techniques.

[35] Even though state sanctioned racial profiling officially came to an end in 1991 when the Population Registration Act of 1950 was revoked by the Population Registration Act Repeal Act, No 114, racial profiling is nonetheless practiced by the post-apartheid democratic government. It manifests in the form of BEE and AA policies, which outlines an apartheid type hierarchy of racial privilege ranging from the 'black' women to 'white' men on opposite sides of the spectrum. According to the White Paper (Department of Public Service and Administration 1998) affirmative action in the public service, "[a]ffirmative action can be described as the laws, programmes or activities designed to redress past imbalances and to ameliorate the conditions of individuals and groups who have been disadvantaged on the grounds of race, gender and disability". It outlines the percentages of black people (50% by 1999), women (30% by 1999) and people with disabilities (2% by 2005) to fill managerial positions. The White Paper (1998) uses the term 'black' as a generic term referring to Africans, Coloureds and Indians (Department of Public Service and Administration 1998).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESISTANCE TO THE POLITICS OF LIKENESS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the notion of physiognomic likeness as an apparatus of Otherisation. The apparatus of likeness was developed during the colonial period and formalised during apartheid. This chapter discusses the challenging of likeness in South African portraiture post-1994. The defiance of portrait likeness is synonymous with the rejection of traditional mimetic practices. Mimesis was the bastion of European art before Modernism.[1] Selected South African portraits discussed in this chapter are characterised by anti-mimetic practices. This arguably reflects anti-colonial sentiments. Anti-mimesis entails both the rejection of likeness and European artistic traditions. Both were arguably regarded as vehicles of identity. It is argued that political, aesthetic and philosophical concerns converge in the anti-mimetic portraits discussed in this chapter. Even though non-mimetic portraits are not unique to South Africa, it is argued that South African artists had an added (political) incentive to move away from mimesis.[2]

[1] Concurrent with the rejection of the mimetic nature of the portrait by the artists discussed in this chapter is the continuation of the aspiration towards the authentic mimetic portrait. The continuation of the notion of the mimetic portrait is arguably found in the photographic albums of ordinary South Africans and artists alike.

[2] The existence of non-mimetic portraits in Europe could be divided into three historical periods, according to Goodyear, Walz and Campagnolo (2016[sp]). The periods are 1912 to 1925, 1961-1970 and 1990 to the present.

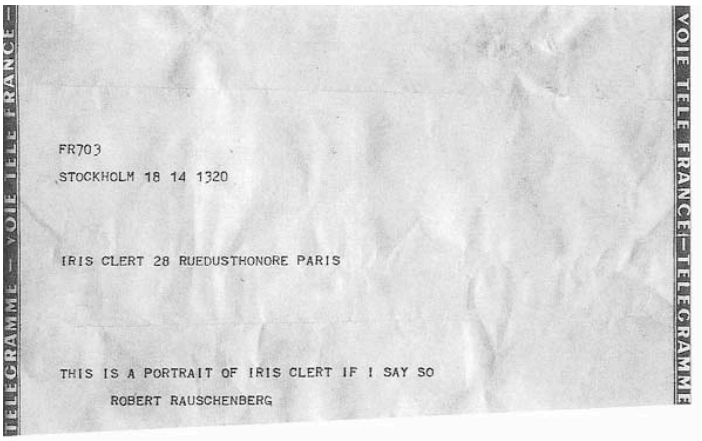

Figure 32: Robert Rauschenberg, *This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so*, 1961.
Telegram (Ink on paper and two paper envelopes).
34.29 x 43.9 cm.
Ahrenberg Collection, Switzerland.
(In deed: Certificates of authenticity in art 2011).

The discussion of Robert Rauschenberg's conceptual work *This is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so* (1961) illustrates an existing anti-mimetic impulse in Western portraiture. The discussion of this example aims to highlight the lack of the political dimension inherent in its anti-mimetology. Instead, Rauschenberg's portrait simply subverts aesthetic portrait conventions and its dominant ontology. Rauschenberg was invited by gallery owner Iris Clert, to participate in a portrait exhibition. He sent a telegraph to Clert stating that "this is a portrait of Iris Clert if I say so". The work is ambiguous, because he did not 'say' whether this is indeed a portrait or not. The philosophical basis of this 'portrait' has affinities with Derrida's deconstruction and Wittgenstein's language games (Gluibizzi 2014). Unlike this portrait, South African portraits discussed in this chapter are also based on a poststructuralist logic of non-essentialism. Poststructuralism is arguably used as a strategy to highlight the link between mimesis and racial discourse in South Africa. This is in contrast to Rauschenberg's portrait that does not reflect further meaning beyond the language game. This to me, is unique to some South African portraits produced after 1994. Anti-mimetic portraits subvert its ontological nature to resist the naturalisation of racial typing. The discussion now turns to the Modernist break in the mimetic tradition, which is important in the development of the postmodern questioning of identity, likeness and representation in portraiture.

4.2 The fragmentation of the metaphysics of presence

Pablo Picasso's (1881-1973) *Portrait of Gertrude Stein* (1905-1906) is a pivotal example of the early abandonment of mimetic likeness in portraiture. The Western representational tradition that characterises portraiture from the quattrocento to the nineteenth century came to an end during Modernism. This is due to the advent of photography, the repudiation of mimesis and the altered status of the individual (West 2004:187). The popularity of portrait photography forced artists to distinguish their painted portraits from photographic ones and portrait paintings subsequently became more experimental (West 2004:191).[3] Modernism's questioning of representation according to West (2004:187), should have had dire consequences for portraiture which has its basis in representation. Instead of foundering, the nature of the portrait changed and it extended its ability to portray (West 2004:191). The reason for the proliferation of the portrait during Modernism is arguably rooted in its intensification of the search for essences. Although mimetic likeness was rejected, the search for essences continued during Modernism.

The *Portrait of Gertrude Stein* (1905-1906) by Pablo Picasso could be argued to be the very portrait to disrupt the century old representational tradition. It contains mimetic elements, as well as anti-mimetic ones (West 2004:194).[4] Artistic stylistic experimentation is valued over its status as a portrait. Its nature as a portrait becomes almost immaterial (West 2004:194). The ontological nature of portraiture became unhinged in the *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*.

[3] This is arguably, also a contributing factor for the return to figurative portraiture. The democratic nature of selfies and the fact that the technology is readily available arguably entails that artists also want to distinguish their practice from that of the untrained masses.

[4] This portrait is included in the very limited discussion of Modernist portraiture, together with Matisse's *Portrait of Madame Matisse with a Green Stripe* (West 2004:194).

Figure 33: Pablo Picasso, *Portrait of Gertrude Stein*, 1905-1906.
Oil on canvas, 100 x 81.3 cm.
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
(Gertrude Stein 1905-6 2014).

Gertrude Stein discusses this portrait in *The Autobiography of Alice B Toklas* (1933), and her discussion provides insight into the break with portrait conventions. According to Stein (1933[sp]), Picasso abandoned the painting of her face: "[a]ll of a sudden one day Picasso painted out the whole head. I can't see you any longer when I look, he said irritably. And so the picture was left like that". She describes the unfinished blocked-out face as "mask-like" (Gertrude Stein, 1905-6, 2014). The quest for Stein's presence has been abandoned, because Picasso started to reduce the subject's form to simple volumes instead of observing his sitter (Gertrude Stein, 1905-6, 2014; Cunningham, Reich & Fichner-Rathus 2009:660). Picasso represents Stein's facial features in a mask-like manner with heavy eyelids and simple contours. Picasso became renowned for this geometrical abstraction of figures and objects (Gertrude Stein, 1905-6, 2014). Mimesis was further abandoned when Picasso continued to paint Stein's facial features in her absence. Instead of representing the sitter, Picasso was influenced by the non-representational art of Africa, Oceania and Iberia that he viewed in an exhibition at the Musee de l'Homme in Paris (Cunningham *et al* 2009:690). Significantly, he represented Stein *through* the visual style of other

objects. The notion of mediation 'through' something else is an important element in the anti-mimetic, anti-colonial portraits discussed in this section. In response to a comment that the portrait does not resemble Stein, Picasso forebodingly replied that "she will" (Pablo Picasso: Gertrude Stein 2011). The proleptic quality of the portrait, also recognised earlier by Dürer, is now recognised by Picasso. The portrait thus precedes the subject and is not imitative of the sitter. It is also an example of the belief that abstraction can bring forth the essential character of the sitter. Stein (1933[sp]), who was a Cubist herself, states that "[f]or me, it is I, and it is the only reproduction of me which is always I, for me". The rejection of likeness therefore does not necessarily entail the rejection of essence.[5] The portraits selected for discussion in this chapter also communicate an 'essential' aspect without necessarily being a likeness. A similar logic in the South African context is present in Vladimir Griegorovich Tretchikoff's *The Green Lady* (1952-1953).

[5] Pointon (1997:189) offers a contrary viewpoint. She asserts that the Cubist portrait is a "portrait without resemblance" and Picasso takes the representational nature of the portrait in terms of likeness and identity to the extreme. Picasso's portraits mask the subject which is contrary to the aim of portraiture (Pointon 1997:196). Stein's comment that it reveals her 'self' disproves this view by Pointon. Furthermore, the view (Barlow 1997:236; Pointon 1997:189) that Modernist portraiture with its anti-mimetic characteristics, is irreconcilable with the Carlyle's notion of the authentic portrait can perhaps be disputed. Both the mimetic representational portrait and the Modernist portrait were in search of the essence and 'truth' of the sitter. Clement Greenberg's (1909-1994) text "Modernist painting" (1960) argues that art searches for an essence, especially through medium, and that this 'essence' is founded on the inherent characteristics or properties of the medium. The search for essence, according to Greenberg, reached its zenith with abstraction (Manzotti 2012 [sp]).

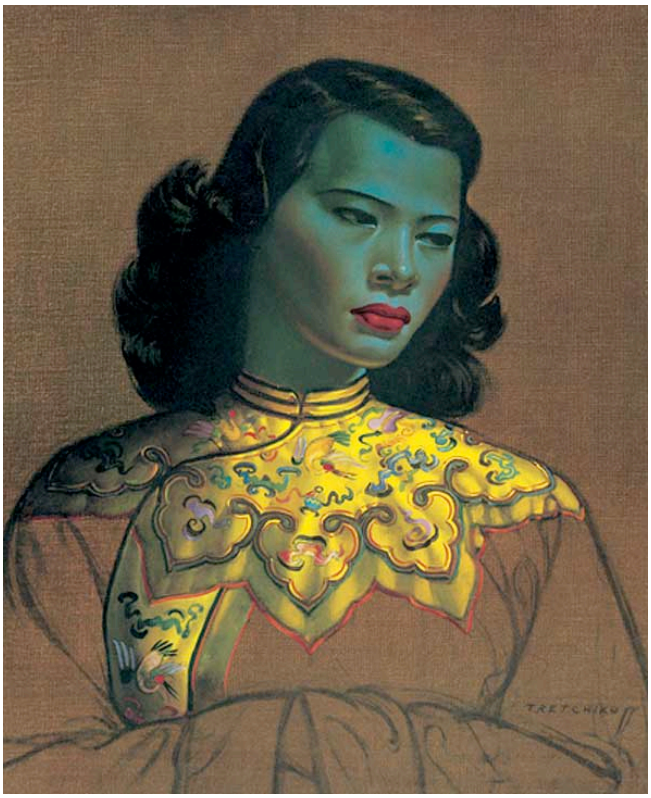

Figure 34: Vladimir Tretchikoff, *The Green Lady*, 1952-1953.
Oil on canvas.
Delaire Graff estate, Stellenbosch.
(Chinese girl: Green Lady by Vladimir Tretchikoff 2012).

Tretchikoff reworked the initial *Green Lady* (1952-1953), a portrait of a South African Chinese laundryman's daughter, after seeing a different woman from the first sitter in the streets of Chinatown in San Francisco (Jamal 2011:61). To him, this woman embodied "the 'essence' of Chinese womanhood" (Jamal 2011:61). This is similar to Picasso's reworking of Stein's portrait after viewing an exhibition of Oceanic art. The idea of 'essence' is thus constructed afterwards (anachronistically), and not mimetically. Tretchikoff's sitter affirmed the above view by asserting that the gown she wore was not yellow: "that was his own invention" (I was the Chinese girl in Tretchikoff's painting 2013). Her facial expression seems serene, and provides insight into her demure 'Chinese' female 'essence'. However, when asked about her facial expression in the portrait, she replied "[w]ell you know, one gets tired sitting and just looking" (I was the Chinese girl in Tretchikoff's painting 2013). This statement exemplifies that her facial expression has nothing to do with her supposed essence.

The Green Lady, referred to as the 'Mona Lisa of kitsch' (Bell 2013[sp]), exemplifies the fragmentation of mimetic praxis, which is already present in the 1950's.[6] This is significant because during the 1950's, the apartheid state intensified racial segregation. As argued in the previous chapter, segregation depends on the iconic taxonomy of racial 'essence'. Likeness and the idea of comparison based on exterior characteristics facilitated the classification of individuals into racial groups. There is a discrepancy between the intensification of state-mimetology, and its fragmentation in the artistic realm. This artistic anti-mimesis is arguably South African, since artists during the 1950's worked "in the isolating shadow of apartheid ... distance(d) from the new twist's in modernism's history" (Lamprecht 2011:160).

The non-representational bluish green alien-like skin tone of *The Green Lady* appears mask-like.[7] This portrait, although seeking to represent the sitter, is not fully mimetic. This is perhaps foreboding of the fragmentation of both the subject and the portrait during the immediate aftermath of apartheid.[8] It is this relationship between essence and mimesis that the portraits discussed in the following section, seek to question.

4.3 The resistance of political presence through anti-mimetic strategies

The discussion now turns to the rejection of racial categories and its corresponding politics of likeness. Artists discussed in this chapter such as Roger Ballen (1950-), Kendell Geers (1968-), Marlene Dumas (1953-), Anthea Pokroy (1986-), Pieter Hugo (1976-), and Richardt Strydom (1971-), reject the notion of identification inherent in traditional mimesis. Instead, their portraits are non-re-presentational. They reject the iconic resemblance between sitter and image. Anti-mimesis entails the conflation of identity and 'race'. This logic is evident in Marlene Dumas' (1999:129) statement

[6] Lamprecht (2011:139) states that *The Green Lady* became a global bestselling image in printed form during the 1950's and 1960's. It is associated with notions of camp and "became evocative of British popular culture". This fact is significant because the portrait reveals not something about the sitter, but an aspect (coolness or retro-ness etc.) of the owner of the print.

[7] Geller (cf Lamprecht 2011:143) describes the portrait in the following manner: "[s]he gazed down sadly from walls on every continent. Her head was bowed, her hair a shadowy aura, her face a bilious mask".

[8] South African artists whose search for essences led them to abstraction in portraiture includes Irma Stern (1894-1966) and Maggie Laubser (1886-1973). The New Group of the late 1930's broke away from representational landscape portrayals (Berman 1993:12). The movement included Battiss, Preller, Laubser, Higgs, Sumner (Berman 1993:15). Alexis Preller (1911-1975) and Walter Battiss (1906-1982) used an 'African aesthetic' to create abstract portraits. An example is Preller's *African Head* (1953), which is inspired by 'Bushman art' and the 'African mystique' (Berman 1993:12).

regarding identity: "[i]dentity. I only use that word when I am forced to. This is where the horrible apartheid concept of 'identity' got us".

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Population Registration Act institutionalised the classification of individuals into pre-determined racial groups. The apartheid state wanted to define racial identity by emphasising racial difference (Comaroff 1997:139). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the iconic segregation through the Population Registration Act was mirrored by the geographical segregation created by the Group Areas Act*, No 41,1950* and the amended Group Areas Act 1957.[9] The rejection of mimesis is thus not limited to formal experimentation, but recognised as having political ramifications.

Atkinson and Breitz (1999:306) assert that in post-1994, the art world could be viewed as a microcosm that mirror the social and political issues in South Africa. The above view reinforces the notion that portrait depictions have an effect on 'reality'. The international questioning of Western philosophical Truth by poststructuralism was exacerbated when Western colonial metanarratives were challenged in South Africa during the fall of apartheid. Williamson (2014:64) states that poststructuralism is in oppositions to the notion of truth and definite objectives. Eagleton (1996:131) recognises this opposition as the questioning of logocentrism and the suggestion that the 'transcendental signified' is a fiction. In South Africa, the questioning of the metanarrative of colonialism that was based on a 'transcendental signified' (the apartheid-state-as-person) was bolstered by poststructuralism. The non-totalising portraits produced around the period of 1994 reflect what Axel (1999:49) refers to as an 'ambivalently constituted subject'.[10] Pictorial fragmentation reflects the fragmented subject position of the artist during this time. This chapter discusses the rejection of

[9] According to Glücksman (2010:[sp]), pass laws are not new: from 1760, a signed pass had to be carried by slaves who wanted to go into towns from the country side; the Hottentot Proclamation of November 1, 1809, introduced by the British, was the first of a number of laws pertaining to the carrying of passes (Glücksman 2010:[sp]). Geographical segregation became formalised in The Urban Areas Native Pass Act No. 18 (1909) which forced 'black' people to carry passes in towns; The land act of 1913; the Native (Urban Areas) act was passed in 1923 which saw the establishment of separate living spaces for 'non-whites' (Youde 2013:68). Importantly, various acts prior to those of the 1950's were discriminatory in nature, and could be seen to be paving the way for the apartheid acts. An example of an earlier act that reinforces segregation is the Squatter's Laws (No 11) 1887, the Land Act 27 of 1913 prohibited 'black' people to buy land outside of designated areas. This act also prohibited squatting (Weideman 2004:9).

[10] Axel (1999:49) refers here to Candice Breitz' spliced 'black' and 'white' hybrid figure in *Rainbow Series No 3* (1996). The image does not form a totality, but a violent splicing of 'white' and 'black' female bodies.

portrait presence through devices such as 'typing' and masking.[11] These devices yield an ambivalent portrait that often contains more than one meaning. These meanings are also often in conflict. A structural relationship seems to exist between the anti-mimetic portrait produced around 1994, and the political events of the time.[12] The crumbling of racial categories had a corresponding effect in the post-apartheid portrait image. [13] Van Alphen (1999:277) agrees that it is possible for portraiture to reflect the doctrine of apartheid, especially if the portrait attempts to capture the subject's 'essence'. Van Alphen (1999:277) asserts that there is a relationship between the political context of apartheid and the mimetic praxis of locating the essence of an individual. Therefore, the iteration inherent in the chain of mimesis ought to be disrupted (Van Alphen 1999:279). Van Alphen (1999:269) here refers to Okwui Enwezor's (in)famous reference to the "anxious [...] repetition" of identity:

> An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness. Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition. Likewise the stereotype, which is its major discursive strategy, is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated.

Before discussing anti-mimetic and anti-colonial portraits, I would briefly like to point out that likeness and mimesis can also be used to undermine racial essence. For example, *Black and white* (1959) by Tretchikoff, questions the notion of racial 'essence'.

[11] The use of the mask and type to conflate the assumptions of traditional portraiture are not the only devices available or used by South African artists. The portrait without referent (as exemplified by the works of Mustafa Maluka), as well as technical distancing devices that defamiliarise the subject, for example, the portraits in Roger Ballen's *Platteland* (1996) series and Pieter Hugo's *There's a place in hell for me and my friends* (2012). Due to the spatial limitations of this study, these strategies will not be discussed.

[12] Frederic Jameson (1991) refers to the structural relationship between the economy and the subsequent mode of artistic expression in his discussion of pastiche.

[13] The portraits discussed here are exhibited or displayed in the public domain, arguably with the intent creating a dialogue. The portrait belonging to the public sphere of display becomes a vehicle through which socio-political aspects are raised, as opposed to only focusing on the character of the sitter. Wood (1986:2) points out that historical portraits are often intended for family and friends.

Figure 35: Vladimir Tretchikoff, *Black and white*, 1959.
(Lamprecht 2011:45).

The portrait above foregrounds the cultural construction of racial categories. Race is shown here as a construction, because the features of the 'black' and 'white' individuals portrayed in Figure 35 are the same. The two different subjects share in the exact physiognomic likeness, save for skin tone. Racial identity is shown here to be constructed by external elements such as clothing and accessories, instead of deriving from an inner 'essence'. This interpretation is arguably in contrast with Tretchkoff's previous portrait *The Green Lady* (Figure 34). This portrait attempts to locate Chinese 'essence'. *Black and white* on the other hand, seem to undermine the notion of essence. *The Green Lady* was painted seven years before *Black and white*. It almost seems as if nine years into apartheid, Tretchikoff revisited his earlier views on essence. *Black and white* seems to convey the idea that if racial essence is a fiction. If this is the case then the only manner in which it requires ontological valence is by its historical iterations by means of 'culture'.[14] Mimesis is here shown as having a political nature, because although identical, the two individuals in Tretchikoff's

[14] The controversy marked by this work precedes the debate around representation raised by Enwezor as responded to by Atkinson and Breitz (1999). Tretchikoff was a foreigner who commented on internal South African policies (Lamprecht 2011:44).

portrait derive their racial being from the mimicry of their respective racial types. The politics of likeness ensures that identities remain separate. The following section discusses the manner in which mimetic likeness is undermined through 'typing' and masking.

4.3.1 Resisting essence through 'typing'

This section discusses 'typing' as a device against apartheid racial typology. Van Alphen (1999:277) reminds that the system of apartheid was literally founded on the depiction of groups or 'types'. Artists discussed in this section 'type' their sitters in response to the meta-narrative of apartheid. The portraits by American born photographer Roger Ballen (1950-) for example, undermine the apartheid construct of Afrikaners as 'superior'. He recast them as pathetic figures to be pitied. Ballen undermines the idea of white supremacy by portraying marginalised white subjects who are psychologically unstable and 'backwards'. If the presupposed Afrikaner 'type' as 'superior' is subverted, then the foundation of apartheid is undermined. The photographs of low class whites in *Platteland* (1996) show that "despite the political privilege apartheid had bestowed on whites, in the physical heart of the land there is inescapable testimony to the failure of the regime even to secure the well-being of the privileged minority" (Roger Ballen 2016).

Figure 36: Roger Ballen, *Sergeant F de Bruin, Department of Prisons employee, Orange Free State, 1992*.
Gelatin Silver Print, 40 x 39.6 cm.
(Roger Ballen Photographer 2016).

The vulnerable body and worn-out facial features of Sergeant De Bruin are the antithesis of white supremacy and the *Canon* of Polykleitos discussed in the previous chapter. According to Fritsch (Bank 2008:16) the 'superior white races' conform to the principle of *symmetria* that is embodied in Doryphoros. Symmetry is believed to impose order onto nature (Tansey & Kleiner 1996:146). The frail and almost pathetic frame of De Bruin is in stark contrast with his uniform that signify the power of the state. The punctum of this portrait perhaps lies in the fact that the portrait becomes a mirror, reflecting not Sergeant F de Bruin or even the 'Afrikaner' anymore, but the viewer. Ballen (cf McClermont 2009) explains that in the portrait of de Bruin, we see ourselves:

> [...] you see who you were a million years ago ... a monkey ... and you were that monkey. Subconsciously, genetically in the back of your mind it's the monkey. You're a monkey, You see it our [*sic*] ancestors, that's why the picture is so strong. Simple as that, because people relate to it [...] We see ourselves as humans deep inside them. It's Neanderthal. Half man, half monkey.

Ballen's book *Platteland: Images of rural South Africa* was published in 1994, the year when apartheid came to an end. Ballen's photographs of 'degenerate' Afrikaners were not well received amongst "the conservative right", who felt deceived and betrayed by the portraits (Roger Ballen: De Hallen Haarlem Archive 2016). Ballen himself became an outcast from the artistic community and even received death threats (Coslovich 2009[sp]). Ballen's portraits seem to follow the logic of the freak show displays that Baartman was subjected to. The colonial gaze that fell onto Baartman is returned in Ballen's portraits. These portraits of Afrikaners split the Self into two. The category of the Self now doubles up as its own Other. It exemplifies the gap inherent in mimesis, and the impossibility of pure presence.

Another example of the muddling of pure racial categories is Johannesburg based artist, Minnette Vári's (1968-) well-known *Self Portrait I* (1995) (Figure 5) and *Self Portrait II* (1995). She portrays herself as belonging to a mixed 'race' and not according to her 'designated' racial type as 'white'. In doing so, Vári intentionally challenges mimesis by portraying herself in a manner that opposes the 'original'. Vári (cf Williamson & Jamal 1996:100) states that "I present a self-portrait, but I am not the black woman in the image".

Figure 37: Marlene Dumas, *Black Drawings*, 1991-1992.
Ink on paper, one piece of slate, 230 x 295 cm.
(Photograph courtesy of the artist).

The idea of 'type' is interrogated by Marlene Dumas who is a South African born artist currently residing in Amsterdam. *Black Drawings* (1991-1992) comprises 111 portraits of people whose facial features are similar due to the use of the medium. It is only through scrutinising the individual faces that difference emerges. 'Difference' (facial features such as noses and lips), emphasised by the anthropological portraits discussed in Chapter Three, indicates the sitters' 'race' as 'black'. Individual uniqueness is otherwise de-emphasised. The faces of some portraits are washed out, whereas others are crudely drawn. The handling of the medium lends the individual portraits a degree of sameness that may highlight a communal experience. According to Van Alphen (1999:279), the portraits in these drawings relate to each other and are thus relational instead of referential. *Black Drawings* refuses to capture its subjects and it resists the logic of apartheid (Van Alphen 1999:277). Mimetic portrayal that produces physiognomic likeness is undermined. Contrary to official bureaucratic portraits, the facial features of the individual portraits are not clearly defined. The 'principle of apartheid' is rejected by portraying individuals in a relational manner, with the emphasis on the group identity instead of individual idiosyncrasies (Van Alphen 1999:277). The anti-mimetology of *Black Drawings* is thus not only aesthetic, but also political.

Figure 38: Anthea Pokroy, *490 Gingers arranged by colour*, 2013.
(Photograph courtesy of the artist).

A similar work in terms of composition and emphasis on 'type' is Anthea Pokroy's (1986-) *490 Gingers arranged by colour*. Anthea Pokroy introduces herself as a 'ginger artist' (I collect gingers 2016) and she 'types' gingers by means of their exclusive occupation of compositional space. The ginger manifesto provided in her exhibition catalogue, declares a "forthcoming revolution" by gingers (Pokroy 2013:1). She provides the 'ginger' subjects with identity cards (Pokroy 2013:24), similar to those of the Pass Law Act of 1952. Pokroy (2013[sp]) affirms this apart-heid of her 'gingers' when she mentions the "innate sense of community and collective experience that emerged from the 'otherness' of gingers". She sub-categorises this type by means of hair tone "from strawberry blonde through to dark auburn and everything in between [...]" (Pokroy 2013:1) (Barnard 2016:47-48). The relational composition creates the 'sense of community', but also alludes to the notion of 'own-ness' during apartheid (Louw 2004:59) (Barnard 2016:48).

The spatial division mimics the real historical practice of geographic segregation during apartheid. Ontological boundaries between fiction and history, characters and people, dissolve by the mimicry of apartheid mechanisms of racial classification and ID documents (Barnard 2016:47). A short essay "Gingers as outsiders" in Pokroy's exhibition catalogue written by James Sey (2013:[sp]) refers to the historical practice of classification. According to Sey (2013:[sp]), "South Africa is a society whose history is marked, if not defined, by particularly virulent forms of eugenicism, racial stereotyping and exclusion from social, political and economic life on the basis of race and identity". Sey (2013:[sp]) views Pokroy's work as "protest and opposition to the manifestations of apartheid, and presents instead an ironic take on apartheid's underpinnings in eugenic beliefs". However, the work seems rather affirmative of the identity located in 'types'. The portraits seem celebratory of the mechanisms of oppression such as 'typing' and the spatial segregation of the sitters.

Pieter Hugo's (1976-) *Albino Portraits*, unlike Pokroy's portraits, emphasise the referent, by rooting the image in the 'reality' of the sitter. Hugo is a famous South African portrait and landscape photographer who lives in Cape Town. He often portrays marginalised groups such as the blind, and dystopias such as technological wastelands in Ghana. Hugo's *Albino Portraits* (2003), portray the sitters as belonging to a 'type', but the portraits seem to bring forth the sitters' individuality. 'Typing' here arguably minimises the space between sitter and viewer.

Figure 39: Pieter Hugo, *Steven Mohapi*, 2003.
Archival pigment on cotton rag paper, 56 x 45.5 cm.
(Pieter Hugo: 26 Artworks, bio and shows on artsy 2013).

Hugo's subjects belong to a minority sub-group (albinos) within a particular 'race' ('black') and are historically marginalised as outcasts. As mentioned already, unlike Pokroy's subjects who have an intra-diegetic ontology, Hugo's subjects have a strong referential value. His portraits are of specific individuals with names and visibly distinct personalities. Whereas Pokroy creates an artificial 'community' for gingers, the Albinism Society of South Africa (ASSA) was launched in 'real life' in 1992 to assist people with albinism with the various difficulties that they face (The Albinism Society of South Africa 2013). Hugo's 'typing' of his sitters calls attention to their common humanity. Their 'type' however soon becomes irrelevant because of their individual character expressed in facial features. Their clothes distinguish them as individuals and do not seem prescribed by the artist. This element reinforces the

referential value of these portraits. Pokroy's portraits on the other hand, seem fictionalised because her sitters have the same expressions, wear similar white T-Shirts and are positioned the same distance from the camera. Whereas Pokroy's subjects have some choice in the acceptance of their 'type' (for instance, they are able to change their hair colour), Hugo's subjects do not. They involuntarily belong to a 'type' that has real physical and social implications for them.[15]

Figure 40: Andy Warhol, *Marilyn diptych*, 1962.
Oil, acrylic, and silkscreen enamel on canvas, 205.44 x 289.56 cm.
Tate Gallery, London.
(Tate: Marilyn Diptych 2004).

A possible precursor to 'typing', especially through composition is Andy Warhol's *Twenty-five Marilyns* (1962). This well-known portrait series presents to the viewer a repetition of a reproduction of Monroe's photograph. Because of the grid-like format, the portraits also become relational. Warhol highlights the practice of 'typing' and the emptiness of pictorial representation in a capitalist society. He does this by repeating the same image, with minor differences. Hugo's portraits on the other hand, are iterations of a 'type', but the result is highly individualising. Whereas his portraits are referential, Warhol's are not. Warhol does not portray Norma Jean, but a film

[15] People with albinism are faced with various social and physical challenges. Physical manifestations include 'white' skin and hair, due to the absence of pigments, blue irises and red pupils. They often suffer from blindness or related eye-problems and are also susceptible to skin cancer. Social problems range from mutilation to murder (for example, the murder in Tanzania due to the belief that their skin, hair and blood have magical qualities). Within the albino category, there are also subdivisions type 1 (OCA 1) and type 2 (OCA 2) (Balantyne 2009[sp]).

construct, from the film *Niagara* (1953) (Marilyn Diptych 2004) (Barnard 2016:51). Norma Jean only momentarily coincided with her fictional cinematic persona, through her performance of the character.

American conceptual photographer Cynthia 'Cindy' Morris Sherman (1954-) is a well-known artist who famously mimics types to showcase that identity is a construct. In the 'self-portrait' below (Figure 41), Sherman assumes the role of the movie icon Marilyn Monroe. This portrait arguably thrice removed from the 'reality' of the referent. Sherman seems to communicate that 'essential' identity does not exist.

Figure 41: Cindy Sherman, *Untitled Film Still #55*, 1980.
Gelatin silver print, 19.2 x 24 cm.
(Cindy Sherman. Untitled Film Still #55. 1980: Moma 2016).

Whereas Sherman highlights the types available to women in contemporary society, Pretoria based artist Frederik Jacobus Eksteen (1973-), also known as Frikkie Eksteen, portrays the 'universal' character types in his *Stock Characters* series, of which *The unsociable man* (2011) (Figure 42) forms part. Even though the aim of this section is to discuss anti-mimetic strategies and the undermining of essences, it is essential to discuss the portraits of Eksteen, because of the focus that is placed on 'typing'. Eksteen's portraits are mimetic, yet he does not portray a specific individual.

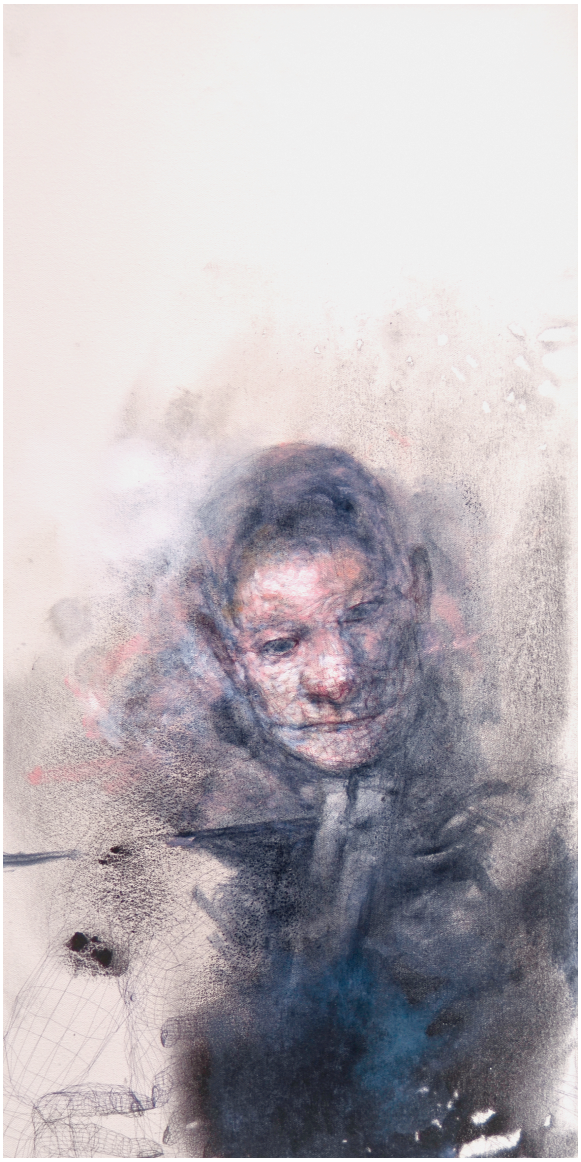

Figure 42: Frikkie Eksteen, *The unsociable man*, 2011.
Oil and inkjet print on canvas, 36.2 x 94.2 cm.
(Photograph courtesy of the artist).

Eksteen (2011) portrays the character types present in *The Characters of Theophrastus* (c 319 BC) (Eksteen 2011:[sp]). This ancient Greek text provides a depiction of moral categories and psychological types. Theophrastus (c. 370 - 287), who was a Greek philosopher and pupil of Aristotle, describes the personality traits of thirty character types. These include the mean man, the coward, the suspicious man, amongst others (Bennet & Hammond 1902:ix-x). In the Introduction of *The Characters of Theophrastus* Bennet and Hammond (1902:xi), reiterate the novelist William Makepeace Thackeray's initial question: "[w]hat stories are new? [...] All types of all characters march through all fables: tremblers and boasters; victims and

bullies; dupes and knaves [...]" (Barnard 2016:49). The truth value of the above types is affirmed by Bennet and Hammond (1902:xii) when they state that: "[...] the changes which may be observed in human nature are small, and the old types of Theophrastus are all about us nowadays and really look and act much the same as they did to the eyes of the ancient Peripatetic". It could therefore be argued that Sherman's re-enactments of types without a definite origin are not new, or even a uniquely postmodern phenomenon. Instead, 'types' are created through their iterations in literature and narratives.[16] Eksteen's *Stock Characters* includes the portrait of *The unsociable man* (2011) (Figure 42), which resembles the other portraits in the series. The figure's face is modelled, but his body remains a mesh like construction. A dark blot seems to grow out of his body, and surrounds his neck. The figure's expression has a timeless quality about it. Eksteen's portraits remind that each iteration of a particular 'type' keeps it alive and enables it to march through literature, art and through life.[17]

[16] The use of character types is prevalent throughout art history. Peter Paul Rubens in his painting *Bacchanal* (early 17th century) for example uses the human figure to embody universal truths that include vices such as gluttony and beauty, amongst others (Robson 1995:38).

[17] Diane Victor's series of *Smoke portraits* (2005) are similar to Eksteen's *Stock Characters* series, in the sense that individual portraits exists within a specifically themed series. Victor's *Smoke portraits* present a series of thirty six portraits of aids patients. The subjects thus belong to the category 'aids' or disease. The message is further strengthened by the medium (ash), which we will all become. Another example of individual portraits within a series is Victor's *Missing children* series (2005-2006).

Figure 43: Richardt Strydom, *Familieportret 2,* 2008.
Photographic print, 87 x 11cm.
(Sasol New Signatures art competition catalogue 2008).

Familieportret 2 (Figure 43) by Richardt Strydom (1971-) is the only family portrait that is discussed in this study.[18] This portrait arguably undermines the notion of the nuclear family system, which is a Western idea. The idea of the nuclear family was introduced in South Africa by European settlers (Amoateng and Richter 2008:2). According to Sasol New Signatures website, "[t]his work depicts and exposes, both literally and figuratively, the extreme misery, the pathos and dehumanisation of poverty". It could however be argued that this work is not referential. The figures are iconographical art historical quotations. The dog in Strydom's portrait arguably signifies the notion of a faithful companion. The dog as reference of loyalty is also evident in Jan van Eyck's (c.1370-1441) portrait *The Arnolfini Marriage* (1434). The mother and 'child' arguably reference the popular art historical theme of the Madonna and child.[19] The man in the photograph alludes to the ancient Greek sculpture

[18] *Familieportret 2* won the Sasol New Signatures competition in 2008, and a heated debate ensued regarding its artistic merits.

[19] The dog as signifier of loyalty is also used in Auguste Renoir's (1841-1919) *The luncheon of the*

Doryphoros (c. 450 - 440 BC) by Polykleitos, in terms of the contrapposto and the similar position of his arm. This allusion conjures up Fritsch's argument discussed in Chapter Three. Fritsch referred to the 'superior white race' that resembles the athleticism of the canon of Polykleitos. Instead of embodying this ideal, the man in Strydom's portrait is its antithesis. He touches the woman's breast, a gesture which signifies her fertility and possible pregnancy.[20] Their domestic surroundings indicate their 'status' as white trash. The dilapidated washing line, the precast wall and the unkempt grass undermine the apartheid ideal of Afrikaner as the 'superior'. Similar to Ballen's portraits, the idea of a failed apartheid regime is exposed.

This section discussed the manner in which 'typing' reject the metanarrative of apartheid iconic typology. It is important to note however, that portraits based on 'typing' is not entirely new. Woodall (1997:2-3) argues that the notion of iconographic types in portraits from the sixteenth century merged with individual likeness of the sitter to portray the sitter's universal traits. What distinguishes the portraits discussed here from traditional iconographic types is the aim of the latter to naturalise 'type'. The South African artists discussed in this section question the practice of typing. Gombrich (1994:1-4) highlights that 'typing' also has a masking effect, since it prevents access to the sitter's authentic being.

4.3.2 Effacing the (colonial) subject through masking

The previous section discussed 'typing' as an anti-mimetic strategy against apartheid essentialist portrayals. This section discusses the anti-mimetology of masking as a strategy of (mis)identification. The masking of the sitter here signifies a misidentification with apartheid constructs. Masking also reveals a double identity, because the person is simultaneously 'himself' as well as the persona portrayed by the mask. The masking of the sitter contradicts the aim of portraiture, which is to reveal or unmask the 'essential' subject (Pointon 1997:197). The face plays a central role in traditional portraiture, because emotions are concentrated in the face. The viewer gains access to the sitter's inner depths, through the decoding of facial expression. Masking therefore denies the interpretative act and 'blocks' access to identity. West

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boating party (1881), in which Renoir's love interest at the time, Aline Charigot, cuddles her little dog.

[20] This alludes to the double-portraits *Gabrielle d'Estrees and her sister, the Duchess of Villars* (c.1594). The Duchess touches the breast of her sister in acknowledgment of the imminent birth of a child (Robson 1995:18).

(2004:213) states that historically, the face indicated individual identity, and was regarded as the 'index of the soul'. It is a specific Western notion to symbolise individualism by matching a particular identity to a represented face (West 2004:17). To disguise the face is therefore recognised as an anti-colonial strategy by South African artists.

The idea of the mask originally referred to the 'false face' worn by an actor (Cuddon 1991:701). Due to its historical origins in Greek theatre, the notion of the disguise personifies deception (Hall 1974:204).[21] The mask could however also bring an aspect of the sitter to the fore. There is a historical link between the notions of 'face' and 'mask' through the etymology of the word 'personality'. 'Personality' derives from the Latin word 'persona', which literally means 'mask'. The role of the theatrical mask is to reveal a *dramatis personae* to the audience. The logic of the theatrical mask is similar the African mask discussed earlier. Both conceal a previous identity in order to reveal a new one associated with the mask. The African mask enables the ancestor to come into being through the ritual. Beideman (1993:42) asserts that "[w]hat is paradoxical about masks is that like words, they may both reveal and conceal identities. They may reveal the roles in which individuals are cast, but they also obscure many other features about their wearers". In this regard, Gombrich (1994:13) states that "[t]he mask swallow up the face [since] we generally do take in the mask before we notice the face". Gombrich (1994:11) also associates the mask with the notion of constructed identity. Gombrich (1994:11) argues that in everyday life, one wears a mask when one's behaviour is determined by the expectations of society. With regards to the mask, he (1994:11) also warns that we "grow into our type till it moulds our behaviour down to our gait and facial expression". The mask therefore conceals the individuality of the sitter and undermines the portrait's ontological nature (Pointon 1997:197).[22] Masking presents facial features as static,

[21] In Greek art, Melpomene, the muse of tragedy, is personified by the mask (Cheney 2007:198). In Greek mythology, the function of the disguise in general is to transform the bearer in order to deceive. Examples are Zeus who disguises himself as a bull or who transforms himself into a swan. In Norse mythology, Odin who disguises himself as a one-eyed traveller with a broad brimmed hat in order to disguise his true identity, also turned himself into a handsome giant in order to win magic mead from the giant's daughter. The mask as disguise is thus closely linked to deception.

[22] Masks do not only disguise the subject: the life masks taken of the sitter by artists such as Verrocchio increase the representational value of the painted portraits (West 2004:22), whereas the death mask conserves the image of the subject after death in ancient Rome (West 2004:63).

and therefore opposes the notion of Western individualism (West 2004:17).[23] The traditional portrait on the other hand, aims to portray a unique aspect of the sitter. Like the traditional portrait, the mask can thus also reveal the identity of the sitter.

The sitter's identity or 'essence' is traditionally mimetically achieved in the portrait. Instead of traditional identification with iconic portrait likeness, Kendell Geers seems to identify with an object in the *Self Portrait* (1995) (Figure 44) below.

Figure 44: Kendell Geers, *Self Portrait*, 1995.
Found object (original destroyed on TWA Flight 800), 9.5 x 7.5 x 6 cm.
Gordonschachatcollection, Johannesburg.
(ArchiveKendellGeers 2013).

According to Geers: "I always thought of the Mandela portrait as a counterpart to the only work I ever made called 'Self Portrait' - the broken Heineken beer bottle IMPORTED FROM HOLLAND" (Geers 2016). He challenges portrait conventions by refuting likeness. It is obvious that the artist bears no physical resemblance to a broken bottle neck and in this sense, mimesis is disrupted. However, because Geers assigns the title of 'self-portrait' to the work, he communicates his identification with

[23] Van Alphen (1999:278) in this regard states that the mask "has had an important function in dismantling the traditional portrait in twentieth-century art", because it presents the facial expression of the sitter as static, which may be perceived as mechanical or grotesque.

this object. The bottle in this work is broken, it is therefore no longer a bottle, but a bottleneck. It used to contain beer, an intoxicating substance, which is imported from Holland. Its broken status transforms the object into a weapon, commonly used in drunken skirmishes. Geers therefore sees himself in this object, broken, imported and violent. It could be argued that he reveals an aspect of himself through an inanimate object that does not reflect his mimetic likeness.

Figure 45: Kendell Geers, *Mined*, 2010.
18 Carat gold, 9.5 x 7.5 x 6 cm.
Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg.
(Goodman Gallery: About Kendell Geers 2016)

Geers' *Mined* (2010), appropriates the 'original' readymade and is thus a highly mimetic work. Williamson (2010:[sp]) states that unlike *Self Portrait* (Figure 44), which is its predecessor, the edges of *Mined* (Figure 45), a cast object in 18 carat gold, have been softened and "will not draw blood". This work arguably alludes to the mineral wealth of South Africa (Williamson 2010:[sp]), and gold in particular.

'Mined' could also refer to the mining of South Africa's resources by foreign countries. This is a neo-colonial situation.[24] Whereas *Self Portrait* (1995) is arguably

[24] The top ten mining companies in South Africa are Anglo American Platinum, Kumba Iron Ore,

an anti-colonial work, *Mined* (2010) could be seen as anti-neo-colonialism. Although a pastiche, *Mined* refers to role that gold played in historical South African conflicts. Gold is part of the reason behind the outbreak of the First Boer War and it is also responsible for the conflict between Kruger and Rhodes. Even though the edges of the object have been softened, and it is aestheticised it is still a dangerous object. It is arguably just as dangerous as the sharp edges of the broken bottle neck of *Self Portrait*. The word 'mined' resembles the word 'mind' phonetically, which perhaps reflects the broken, dangerous and rich psychological state of the artist.

Self Portrait (Figure 44) and *Mined* (Figure 45) arguably mask the 'essential self' of the traditional Western portrait. They also reveal alternative meanings which could not surface without the idea of the mask. Kendell Geers however, still undermines the "facial ontological nature of portraiture" (Barnard 2016:49) as an anti-colonial strategy.

Figure 46: Kendell Geers, *Portrait of the artist as a young man*, 1993.
Performance/Photograph, 101.8 x 72.1 cm.
(Photograph courtesy of the artist).

AngloGold Ashanti, Impala Platinum, Exxaro Resources, Assore, African Rainbow Minerals, Gold Fields, Sibanye Gold and Lonmin (SA Mine 2014).

In *Portrait of the artist as a young man* (1993) (Figure 46), he wears a rubber mask of Nelson Mandela. The darker tone of the mask that contrast with the sitter's white skin becomes a focal point and hints at the presence of 'race'. As mentioned before, it is iconoclastic to wear a mask in a portrait, because it disguises the face in which personal identity is concentrated (Woodall 1997:1&6). This portrait by Geers could thus be seen as subversive of Western identity. Seated amongst wooden African masks (curio) in an open air market, Geers hides his 'white' face by means of a 'black' mask (Barnard 2016:50). The African wooden masks are sold to tourists, but used to belong in a ritual context. They used to be sacred objects through which the ancestor manifests. The African mask now belongs to the realm of commercialism. This signifies Africa in a stereotypical manner as exotic, primitive and dark (Barnard 2016:50). Geers appears to be selling copies of African masks and he seems to betray an African identity by exploiting its cultural objects. Through wearing a Mandela mask Geers assumes the identity of a philanthropist, which disguises the 'white' colonial intention. He wears military camouflage clothing, associated with war and politics. In this context, the military apparel arguably refers to the selling or exploitation of cultural resources, which is a historical colonial practice (Barnard 2016:50). The commercial act depicted in this portrait is thus a political one. Although the sitter's entire body is covered, his white hands and neck are exposed. The neck alludes to his vulnerability, but also refers back to his 'bottle neck' *Self Portrait* (1995) (Figure 44). The two positions alluded to by the two opposing types of necks are in contrast to each other.[25] The defenceless neck in *Portrait of a young man* signifies vulnerability, whereas the broken bottleneck reveals a violent characteristic. The bottleneck in *Mined* (2010) seems blunted by the process of being turned into gold. Is Geers alluding to the fact that the initial and authentic struggle against colonialism has been aestheticised and 'blunted' by material comforts?

[25] Regarding the notion of identity, Kellner (2012:13) asserts that: "[g]ermane to Geers' artistic practice is the notion of his identity. That of a "bastard:, of not being of legitimate birth but born between Europe and Africa, and as such his identity is constructed as a vernacular - a third-world version of modernity".

Figure 47: Kendell Geers, *Out of Africa*, 1994.
Latex Mandela mask and camouflage jacket, dimensions variable.
Collection the artist.
(Kellner 2012:6).

Out of Africa (1994) (Figure 47) by Kendell Geers seems to be the successor of *Portrait of a young man* (1993). *Out of Africa* foregrounds the absence of the white body, which was central in the previous work. The work could thus be interpreted as a portrait of an absent sitter. The notion of the mask is taken to the extreme in this work when the subject is not disguised, but disappears completely. Only the camouflage (Mandela mask and military jacket) remains. The jacket hangs limp and the Mandela mask is on display as an *objet d'art*. The Mandela mask echoes the empty wooden masks of the previous works. Both types of masks become objects of display, devoid of their initial meanings. The title, (out of Africa), the missing white body and the 'hanging up' of mask and apparel possible allude to the reality of white emigration to Europe during the 1994 elections. This arguably refers to the scramble out of (South) Africa. Both fighting (military apparel) and philanthropy (mask of Mandela) have been abandoned. The mask as disguise averts the viewer's gaze invited by traditional portraiture. It deflects the gaze to create an alternative interpretation

The mask is central to the body of portraits by Richardt Strydom in the *White Mask* series. Strydom's *Portret van n jong man #4* (Figure 48) portrays a man whose face is disguised by a disfigured mask of stitched scars (Barnard 2016:50).

Figure 48: Richardt Strydom, *Portret van a jong man # 4*, 2012.
Digital print on artist paper, 8.70 cm x 6.10 cm.
(Photograph courtesy of the artist).

The mask is created from a photographic cut-out of a wound. The stitched wound originates from a different location of the body. It is possibly derived from somebody else's body. The wound seems to be digitally enlarged before being superimposed onto the sitter's face (Barnard 2016:50). Instead of gaining insight into the sitter's character via his facial features, the viewer is confronted with a static mask. The mask reveals "the absence of facial syntax", (Pointon 1997:196). The individualism concentrated in the facial features in *Portret van n jong man #4* has thus been obliterated (Barnard 2016:50). The wound seems to be recently inflicted, but on the mend. This portrait arguably portrays a subject defined by earlier trauma and violence

(Barnard 2016:50). The hand gesture mimics the shape of a gun. This possibly signifies that the trauma is self-inflicted. The sitter's identity seems ambivalent: he is simultaneously a victim of violence and a perpetrator. It is interesting to note that a synonym for scar is 'defacement', which literally means to 'spoil the surface or appearance of something' (Oxford dictionaries 2014). The appearance or likeness, which in traditional portraiture refers to the subject's essence, has here been defaced by a mask of scars.

The scarification on traditional African masks contains codified markings (Wintjes & Goncalves 2014:72). The mask transforms the individual into a different entity which can only come into being through the mask (Wintjes & Goncalves 2014:77). In the same manner, *Portret van a jong man #4* manifests through a brutal process of being wounded and stitched up. The artistic process mimics the wound by means of the rough photographic cut out and its crude superimposition the sitter's face (Barnard 2016:50). What comes into being is arguably the portrait of an Afrikaner male, a victim of his own doing. In post-apartheid South Africa, the Afrikaner male is however also a victim of economic practices that are racially based (Boersema 2013:240).

The concealing capacity of the mask has affinities to Jameson's notion of pastiche. Jameson (1991:17) refers to pastiche as "[...] the wearing of a linguistic mask". If *Portret van a jong man #4* is a pastiche, then it alludes to other portraits arguably without revealing deeper meaning. Its most obvious reference is *Portrait of a young man* (1916), a novel by the Irish writer James Joyce (1882-1941). This is also the title of the self-portrait by Kendell Geers, discussed earlier. According to Geers (2016), Joyce "wrote in English but as protest – he was Irish and wrote as an Irishman protesting against his colonisers in their own tongue". In a similar manner, the portraits by Geers and Strydom use the conventions of portraiture in protest. Therefore, unlike 'traditional' pastiche that is a "statue with blind eyeballs" (Jameson 1991:17), Geers and Strydom's pastiche is meaningful. References to other works add to various layers of meanings, which add to the exegesis of their portraits.

The allusion to *Portrait of a young man* (c. 1550) by Italian mannerist Agnolo Bronzino, promotes the revelation of a more meaningful interpretation. Bronzino portrays his sitter as one of status and learning (Tansey & Kleiner 1996:766). Strydom's 'jong man' (the title implies that he is an Afrikaner male) is in contrast with Bronzino's sitter who seems to be the personification of a gentleman (Barnard

2016:51). The naked sitter in Strydom's work wears a grotesque mask. The portrait by Bronzino also contains monstrous masks, carved into the wooden furniture, and another mask is formed in his trousers' folds (Barnard 2016:51). Bronzino's sitter lived during the late Renaissance when colonialism was still in its infancy. In contrast, Strydom's subject has seen the horrors of colonialism and arguably becomes its personification. The series of male portraits in Strydom's *White Mask* series suggest that Afrikaner men as a collective share a disfigured identity and are effaced by colonialism. The repetition of an identity 'type' is thus similar to the collective 'typing' discussed earlier by Pokroy, Warhol, Dumas, and Hugo.

To conclude the discussion of the masked subject in the portrait, Strydom's *Ad Hominem* (2010) (Latin for 'to the person') is explored. This portrait was part of the "Transgressions and boundaries of the page", an artist's book, based on Strydom's portrait series in *A verbis ad Verbera: From words to blows*. Figure 49 presents a sitter who is masked by a balaclava, as well as by the vector overlay. The balaclava is a garment traditionally made of wool and designed to cover the face. It is associated with violence as it traces its origin to soldiers fighting in the Crimean war (Balaclava 2014). In South Africa, it is also associated with crime, since criminals often use the balaclava to disguise their facial features.[26]

[26] A group of thugs dubbed 'the balaclava gang' are linked to various violent crimes in Johannesburg is one example (Nair 2012).

Figure 49: Richardt Strydom and Jaco Burger, *Ad Hominem*, 2010.
Artist book.
Unisa collection.
(Richardt Strydom: A portfolio of artworks 2011).

The subjects of the portraits in this section are literally effaced, since their facial features rendered inconspicuous through the mask. It is significant to note that the term 'efface' originated in the 15th century and derives from the French word *effacer*, which means to "pardon or be absolved from (an offense)" (Oxford dictionaries: efface 2014). The fact that the works discussed here are framed within a postcolonial framework could allude to the desire to be absolved from past practices.

This notion of effacing as 'pardon' links with Deleuze and Guattari's (2004:198, 201, 332) theory of facialisation (*visagéité*) of the body. Deleuze and Guattari (Apter 1999:184) refer to the "hegemonic facescape of the coloniser" - *visagéité* provides "regimes of 'face-ness'" and renders the body safe by making it readable. The idea of facialisation neutralises the "terrifying spectre of the inhuman" because it turns one into a subject (Apter 1999:184). Regarding the mask's affinities with colonialism, Deleuze and Guattari (2004:196) state that: "[t]he face is not universal. It is not even that of the white man; it is the White Man himself [...] The face is Christ". Bolt (2004:134) affirms this view and writes that:

> For Deleuze, 'facialisation' is the mechanism by which we classify, stratify and fix. I would suggest this corresponds with the glare in its

> incarnation as a fierce and piercing stare. Operating at this end of the spectrum, 'facialisation' and the glare are colonising movements. Deleuze and Guattari postulate a correlation between the face and the landscape that exemplifies this [...].

The effaced sitters in the portraits of Strydom and Geers signify a rejection of the facialisation by the apartheid regime and its corresponding politics of likeness embedded in colonialism.

4.4 Conclusion

The anti-mimetic devices of 'typing' and masking correspond to the resistance of the meta-narrative of apartheid and its 'stable' identities. According to Farber (2009:14) for both L'Ange and Steyn, during the first decade of post-apartheid the public consciousness of white South Africans is characterised by displacement as the main psychological condition. The artists discussed in this section reject the roles that apartheid had cast them in. Their anti-mimetology is employed as an anti-colonial strategy of resistance. Their anti-mimetic portraits do not resemble their sitters. The politics of likeness, which is arguably a carrier of Western identity and colonialism is rejected through the portraits discussed in this chapter. The devices of 'typing' and the masking of facial features resist notions of individualism. Ballen rejects the myth of superior white identity. Marlene Dumas refuses to arrest the presence of the individual and proposes the non-referential collective as an alternative (Van Alphen 1999:277 cf Barnard 2016:). Pokroy, in her "ginger utopia" (Pokroy 2013:[sp]), highlights apartheid classification and 'typing' in an ironic presentation of a ginger typology (Barnard 2016:52). Hugo's *Albino Portraits* provide a face to this marginalised group and also question 'pure' categories of 'black' and 'white'. Eksteen refers to the universal character types available to human beings regardless of 'race'. He arguably highlights that the notion of type is constructed through reiteration. Geers' masked self-portraits reveal his colonial identity as violent and exploitative. Richardt Strydom's *Familieportret 2* undermines the notion of the nuclear family, the spindle around which apartheid 'white' identity revolved. He also questions the superiority of whites as the antithesis of the Greek ideal of Polykleitos. *Portret van n jong man #4* for example, through masking, reveals the Afrikaner male as effaced and disfigured by colonial practices. The artists discussed in this chapter reject the notion of capturing the 'essence' of the sitter. As apartheid draws to an end, the refusal to fix

identity through mimesis becomes clear.[27] The transition from mimesis to methexis; from imitation to participation, is explored in the next section. The next chapter explores the criticism and rewriting of mimetology by Derrida, Lacoue-Labarthe and Gadamer.

[27] With regards to mimesis, Woodall (1997:22) points to the 'sacrificial metaphor' that is inherent in the idea of capturing someone's photographic likeness. This analogy is often used in relation to patriarchal possession. An example is Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* (2001). Marian, the female protagonist states that: "[h]e was sizing her up as he would a new camera [...]" (Atwood 2001:150). This thought of Marian takes place in a restaurant as Peter, her fiancé, is eating a steak. As he eats, the thought of a deer being shot enters her mind. She thus equates the taking of pictures with being 'shot' (fixed) like a deer and owned (devoured) like the piece of steak on her fiancé's plate.

CHAPTER FIVE

FROM MIMETIC REFLECTION TOWARDS METHEXIST PARTICIPATION

If you look at a bed, or anything else, sideways or endways or from some other angle, does it make any difference to the bed? Isn't it merely that it 'looks' different, without being different?
(Plato 1979:426).

5.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the manner in which the process of mimesis is replaced with that of methexis in relation to portraiture. Gadamer revisits Plato's notion of mimesis in order to show that Plato has always meant mimesis to include the notion of methexis. It has already been argued that in portraiture, mimesis traditionally refers to a linear process of the imitation of the sitter by the portrait. The traditional portrait is seen as a copy or a representation that stands in for the sitter; a mimesis of the sitter. The term 'representation' in this context is synonymous with mimesis (Potolsky 2006:164). Chapter Two discussed how mimesis has been employed in establishing the subject's presence in the portrait. Mimesis is the linchpin in this metaphysical quest and it is perceived to immortalise the individual. Mimesis has to disguise itself and pretend that it is not there, so that the sitter-original can find a permanent resting place in the portrait-copy. A so-called transparent visual style is thus a vital element of mimesis, and in the Western tradition, portraiture often employs realism.[1] Chapter Three discussed the manner in which the mimetic process – this 'transparency' – became state controlled in order to create a 'natural' racial order to which people had to conform to. The focus shifted from capturing the sitter's authentic presence to creating and arresting a political likeness. Chapter Four discussed the rejection of the politics of likeness, together with the process of mimesis. The artistic forsaking of mimesis was not a mere aesthetic choice exercised by the artists of the time. Instead, anti-mimetology was a deliberate political decision to create non-representational portraits. The refusal to participate in the apartheid practice of the identification and arrest of identity became a political strategy of resistance. The current chapter investigates the philosophical underpinnings of this visual shift from mimesis to

[1] A transparent style is not limited to realism; expressionism is arguably 'transparent' when the sitter's emotional state is expressed.

methexis. It is argued that Platonic linear mimesis has the capacity to become totalitarian and repressive. It could be viewed as totalitarian because the original takes precedence over the copy and prescribes its identity. The copy thus always stands in service of the original. Methexis on the other hand, becomes a fluid process of participation. The democratic process of methexis arguably underpins the ontological nature of the selected selfies and digital presentations discussed in Chapter Six.

The aim of the current chapter is thus to investigate the manner in which Platonic mimesis (*μίμησις*) has been replaced by the notion of productive methexis (*μέθεξις*). To this end, this discussion will turn to selected theories by Jacques Derrida and Hans-Georg Gadamer. The pairing of Gadamer and Derrida's theories is ironic due to the "Gadamer-Derrida encounter" of Paris, 1981, which is described by many as a (non)encounter because the two philosophers could not find common ground.[2] In this regard, Michelfelder and Palmer (1989:1) assert: "'[h]ermeneutics' and 'deconstruction': two terms that name two bodies of thought, two sets of texts, which today bear the signatures 'Gadamer' and 'Derrida'". Their perspectives are inherently incompatible and "mutually exclusive" (Michelfelder & Palmer 1989:1). It will nonetheless be argued that Derrida's selected theories *are* compatible with the notion of mimesis proposed by Gadamer.[3] The notion of mimesis is not coincidental to visual portrait production; it is the philosophical bedrock from which all artistic production in every epoch flow.[4] Any change in thinking about mimesis initiates a

[2] Michelfelder and Palmer (1989:2) summarises the encounter between Gadamer and Derrida as follows: "Philippe Forget organised a symposium entitled 'Text and interpretation' at the Goethe Institute in Paris in April 1981. Two conflicting perspectives – hermeneutics, based in German philosophy – and French poststructuralism were presented. Here, Derrida posed to Gadamer three questions, to which Gadamer replied in turn. The crux of the disagreement seems to be Derrida's equation of hermeneutics with metaphysics; a viewpoint which Gadamer opposes as incorrect". This exchange was published and edited by *Forget in Text und Interpretation*. This text is made available in English by Michelfelder and Palmer in their book *Dialogue and deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida encounter*. According to Stapleton (1994:305), Gadamer and Derrida's essays, together with fifteen papers by other scholars who discuss this encounter was published by Michelfelder and Palmer. This work also contains three essays by Gadamer in dialogue with Derrida.

[3] It is however obvious that deconstruction as a whole is irreconcilable with hermeneutics since deconstruction subverts and undermines meaning, whereas hermeneutics deals with the extraction of meaning. Hermeneutics also has its origins in Christian theology, whereas deconstruction arguably has its roots in the nihilism of Nietzsche.

[4] Potolsky (2006:2) agrees that in Western culture, the idea of art would be unimaginable without the existence of mimetic theory. Potolsky (2006:11) adds that "[t]he theory of mimesis has so woven itself into the texture of Western thinking about representation that the first step in understanding the concept is recognizing that it is a concept, a map [Borges' map], as it were, of the relationship between art and nature, and not a perennial feature of the landscape".

corresponding visual vocabulary that takes on the character of the interpretation of mimetology at the time.[5] Mimesis is the spindle on which ideas of self, world and sign revolves (Schweiker 1990:189). As long as these three elements are brought in relation to each other, mimesis will remain relevant.

This chapter is mainly philosophical in nature and discusses the 'mimetic impossibility' pointed out by Derrida and Gadamer. The new process that arises from the critique of mimesis arguably underpins the participatory selfies discussed in the next chapter. To this end, a brief overview of Platonic mimesis is explored before Jacques Derrida's analysis of mimesis is investigated. Derrida's theories of *différance,* the supplement, play, and the trace underpin the logic of non-identification in the previous chapter. Derrida's theories are referred to in this chapter to provide a critique of mimetology and to pave the way for thinking about Gadamer's methexis. In fact, it could be argued that Derrida's concepts of *différance,* the supplement, play, and the trace are inherent in Gadamer's idea of methexis, even though Gadamer would probably object to this view. The current chapter finally investigates Gadamer's notion of methexis that proceeds beyond mimesis and adds an interactive participatory dimension to this concept.

5.2 A brief overview of mimesis

Plato is regarded as the father of mimesis (Halliwell 2002). In fact, Potolsky (2006:5) argues that mimesis remains located in the theories of Plato (the *Republic*) and Aristotle (*Poetics*), and has not been altered substantially before the twentieth century. Plato and Aristotle shared the meaning of mimesis as imitation, but whereas Plato was apprehensive of its power (mimesis, an "infectious drug") (Melberg 1995:20), Aristotle was intrigued by it (Conway 1996[sp]). Their interpretations of mimesis support their respective understandings of the reality that art is supposed to imitate (Conway 1996:[sp]). These two different views highlight that mimesis itself does not have an 'inherent' meaning. Instead, it changes character in order to provide the foundation for thinking about reality and its relationship to art in a meaningful manner.

[5] Potolsky (2006:1-2) affirms this view by asserting that "[m]imesis takes on different guises in different historical contexts, masquerading under a variety of related terms and translations: emulation, mimicry, dissimulation, doubling, theatricality, realism, identification, correspondence, depiction, verisimilitude, resemblance. No one translation and no one interpretation, is sufficient to encompass its complexity and the tradition of commentary it has inspired".

It is important to note that several authors including Stephen Halliwell (2002:25) argue that Plato's understanding of mimesis is not singular or monolithic. Plato uses the term in a variety of contexts in relation to different types of subject matter ranging from metaphysics and ethics to the visual arts. Potolsky (2006:5) on the contrary asserts that "the term [mimesis] *is* monolithic, an overarching concept that theorists are compelled to accept or reject, but do not feel free to decisively transform". The term in this study has been used to refer to the representation or imitation of something with the aim of creating a faithful or authentic copy, specifically as it pertains to traditional portraiture. It is also worthwhile to note that although Plato disapproves of mimetic art, he himself falls prey to its power when he imitates and re-presents Socrates' ideas in the *Republic* (375 BC) and *Timaeus* (c. 360 BC).[6] The main characters in the *Republic* are Adeimantus and Glaucon, and they are also Plato's brothers in real life (Lee 1974:11). The extent to which the characters are mimeses of his brothers is not known, but it is clear that Plato falls into the mimetic trap that he warns about. Potolsky (2006:5) confirms this potential pitfall by asserting that: "... a history of mimesis risks becoming hopelessly entangled in the story it tells" and that "[m]imesis cannot be represented without the use of mimetic processes".

This discussion now turns to Plato's view of mimesis, expounded in the *Republic*, Book Ten. It becomes clear that Plato wanted to guard against the deceptive power of mimesis. Plato re-tells Socrates' story of the three beds in order to demonstrate the nature of true reality versus the imitation of it, and to interrogate the nature of representation. In Book Ten, Plato asks: "[c]an you tell me in general terms what representation is?" (Plato 1979:422). In order to explain the nature of representation, Plato (1979:422-423) refers to the form of an object, which is impossible to imitate because it is *original*. To explain this idea further, he refers to a 'craftsman' who not only invented the Forms (*eide*) of objects, but also created himself, all animals and plant life. The craftsman invented the earth, the sky and the gods, the celestial bodies and the underworld (Plato 1979:423). Plato contrasts this omnipotent creator with an ordinary person who is also able to make these things. But Plato warns that these creations will be inferior. The ordinary person could create by taking "a

[6] Not only is Plato himself guilty of mimesis in imitating (re-presenting) Socrates' thoughts, he offers, according to Melberg (1995:12), his anti-mimetic ideas in "a poetic rejection of poetry". In *Timaeus* (360 BC), Plato's discusses the relationship between time, image and imitation (Melberg 1995:22). In this text, Plato argues that mimesis is the modus operandi for the creation of the universe, and the world is "created in the greatest similarity to the creator himself" (Melberg 1995:20&22). Plato's mimesis is thus a metaphysical concept.

mirror and turn it round in all directions; before long you will create sun and stars and earth [...]" (Plato 1979:423). These created things will not only be the real objects but will be mere reflections (Plato 1979:423). Imitations are thus contrasted with what is real. Plato (1979:424) extrapolates on this by means of the analogy of the beds: the bed in nature is made by god; the second by a carpenter and the third by a painter. The painter is only able to create a bed of *appearance* and the carpenter crafts a bed, and although real, it remains a *particular* bed, and not the *form* of the bed (Plato 1979:424). The carpenter thus makes "something which *resembles* 'what is' without *being* it". The painter is even worse off because he merely 'represents' what the other two have manufactured (Plato 1979:425). This artistic "representation is thus a third remove from reality" (Plato 1979:425). The problem with the representation is that it is a copy of an object according to "superficial appearance" (Plato 1979:426). The copy does not share in the object's true being. This is a representation not of the truth, but of an apparition (Plato 1979:426). The problem of being "a third removed from reality" is that it does not provide insight into the truth (Plato 1979:427). The painter thus manufactures copies of copies and if he had true knowledge of the objects he represents, he would not be caught up in their representations (Plato 1979:427). He would instead occupy himself with the actual object (Plato 1979:427). Plato (1979:429) asserts that the artist who imitates by means of likeness only has insight into appearance, without understanding reality. He refers disapprovingly to a veristic portrait that deceives the viewer from a distance due to its realism. Yet, the artist has no insight into the real craft practiced by the sitter (Plato 1979:426).

Mimesis, according to Plato (1979:430), therefore, concerns three techniques (manufacture, use, and representation). The artist does not have knowledge of the real use of the object, unlike for example, the rider who has knowledge of the real use of the bridle and a bit (Plato's examples). The rider can convey their effectiveness to the harness-maker, whereas the artist cannot. The artist has no input from someone "who knows what he ought to paint [...]" (Plato 1979:431). He is thus "beautifully ill-informed" on his subject matter and his representations "will be anything that appeals to the taste of the ignorant multitude" (Plato 1979:431).

It seems that Plato's second problem with imitation is its subjective nature, which is incompatible with the truth. From this excerpt it is also clear the he deems the "ignorant multitude" as living in false consciousness. The mimetic copy of appearance is thus on a different ontological level than the transcendental original.

These ontological levels will be collapsed by both Derrida and Gadamer further on in this discussion.

Even though Plato disapproved of mimesis, it defines the ontological nature of the portrait as copy of its human original. It is intended as a truthful representation beyond incidental appearances. Platonic mimesis entails that art (*tēchne*) is a representation (1974:421) that *mirrors*, and in portraiture, mimesis entails the mirroring of the sitter's 'authentic' character beyond the veil of external appearance. The portraits discussed in Chapter Two are examples of this logic. The next section examines Derrida's analysis of mimesis. Derrida (cf Potolsky 2006:2) asserts that "the whole history of the interpretation of the arts of letters has moved and been transformed within the diverse logical possibilities opened up by the concept of *mimesis*". It is these alternative possibilities that will be discussed in the following section.

5.3 Derrida on mimesis: Two productions

The true character of mimesis is to be without model
(Nancy 2013:61).

The concept of mimesis is the main focus of several of Derrida's texts in in the 1970's, *Dissemination* (1972); his essay 'White Mythology' (1971) and the essay "Economimesis" (1975). In fact, his entire oeuvre (*Of grammatology* (1967); *Writing and difference* (1978) amongst many others), derives from his deconstruction of mimetic truth. In "White Mythology" and "Economimesis", he interprets mimesis in the classical manner as resemblance and analogy (Melberg 1995:5), but questions its logic. Derrida's investigations of Kantian thought (in "Economimesis") developed his ideas on mimesis further (Melberg 1995:5). Derrida states that "true mimesis [is] between two producing subjects and not between two produced things", which means that "true mimesis" is in fact a "condemnation of the imitation" (Melberg 1995:5). Mimesis here shifts in meaning from imitative to productive. Melberg (1995:5) makes a valuable comment that the mimesis as defined by Auerbach is turned into "a mimetical order of difference" by Derrida, and before him, by Nietzsche and Heidegger. Melberg (1995:5) refers to this shift in thinking about mimesis as "an ontological turn in favour of difference", because it creates "two forms of repetition". Instead of producing similarity between copy and original, mimesis highlights the

ontological gap and the fact that they can never coincide into exact sameness. Auerbach's mimesis seeks sameness (similarity), because the term is almost synonymous with representation. Derrida's differential mimesis is based on the operation of *différance*, which makes mimesis as representation impossible. Parsons (2009) asserts that "[f]or Derrida, mimetic action is a perpetual illusion, a constant displacement, through the production of doubles". This discussion on Derrida's questioning of mimetic presence flows from his concept of *différance* and the concepts of the supplement, play, and the trace. These concepts are characterised by the principle of *différance* and therefore undermine (or deconstruct) notions of representation, presence and mimesis. Although Derrida does not use these theories in a coherent strategy against mimetic presence, it is clear that their ontological nature (as non-concepts/anti-concepts) make the full presence of the sign, of which the portrait forms part, impossible.[7] However, Derrida's entire corpus arguably addresses mimesis, since his writing interrogates notions of representation, presence and truth. It is my view that many of these 'non-concepts' (*différance,* the supplement, play, and the trace) are intimately related and even interweaved with mimesis. The discussion that follows therefore does not treat them in a particular order or even as clearly delineated sections.

Derrida's *Of grammatology* (1997a:141) investigates the notion of "the chain of supplements". Although not originally written in the context of portraiture, the "chain of supplements", which lacks an origin has important consequences for thinking about portraiture. Derrida (1997a:145) states that:

> But the supplement supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself *in-the-place-of*; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence [...]. As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief, it place is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness.

This chain of supplements has no origin, because as a supplement is added also replaces what existed before. The logic of the supplement makes it impossible to think of original and copy: "[t]he exterior of pure presence, the sign or the image, is thus precisely not external" (Aldridge 2014:204).

[7] Stuart Hall (2004:120) describes Derrida's notion of *différance* as a (non)concept because it has not positive term since the meaning of a word is derived from its difference within the chain of signification. Because of perpetual difference, a final signified is never reached.

The above thinking that the outside (image) is also on the inside, arguably links with Gadamer's notion of participation (discussed later in this chapter). The portrait as a sign of the sitter's presence, is not only a copy, but a "replacement-supplement" of the sitter. The sitter should not be thought of as the origin of the portrait-copy, but is merely part of the chain, consisting him or herself of supplements. Therefore, the portrait, the 'exterior of pure presence' is not exactly external to the sitter.

In "Economimesis", Derrida challenges the two types of identification inherent in mimesis. The identification of art with nature (that nature can be made present through art), and the comparison of human productive action with the action of god (Parsons 2009). In *Dissemination* (2004:206), Derrida rejects the truth value attached to mimesis. He distinguishes between the two truth systems that govern Western thinking. They are truth as *adequatio* and truth as *alētheia*. Truth as agreement (*homoiōsis* or *adequatio*), suggests the equality between copy and original. The copy here becomes self-effacing in order to conform to the life or essence (*phusis*), which it wants to portray (Derrida 2004:206). Truth as *alētheia* entails that *mimēsis* unveils a hidden truth: "it signifies the presentation of the thing itself" (Derrida 2004:206). An example is the actor who plays or reveals a character. Derrida seems to differ from Gadamer here, since he does not believe in mimetic action as the presentation of the self – mimesis cannot lead to an epiphany (Schweiker 1988:32). Instead, mimesis creates "two productions" as opposed to imitation. In Derrida's (1981a:9) words:

> *Mimesis* here is not the representation of one thing by another, the relation of resemblance or of identification between two beings, the reproduction of a product of nature by a product of art. It is not the relation of two products but of two productions. And of two freedoms. The artist does not imitate things in nature, or, if you will, in *natura naturata*, but the acts of *natura naturans*, the operations of the *physis*.

The implications for portraiture is that it can no longer be regarded as an imitation (*adequatio*) of the sitter, and that one should not seek a resemblance between the two entities, and it does not point to *alētheia* or the sitter's truth. This 'mimesis' is thus not entirely mimetic. Derrida asserts that mimesis is unable to create any similarity; it is only capable of creating difference. He denies mimesis its former representational power. The problem that this view poses to portraiture is that the portrait 'represents' by definition. Derrida's notion of the trace (*Spur*) arguably provides an answer to this

obstacle. The trace is according to Derrida (1997a:xviii), incompatible with identity formation, because it negates the idea of origin. Derrida (xviii) states that the trace marks the evaporation of the idea of the origin, or more specifically, the origin has never existed because it is composed of the trace, which lies at the beginning of the origin. Following this logic, the portrait does not contain the subject's full presence. Rather, it becomes a *trace* of the subject's presence. As an absent or empty sign devoid of the subject's presence, it is also the "origin" (archē-trace), of the subject. Derrida uses the term trace instead of the sign, a usage which Gadamer agrees to (Palmer 2007:374). Because of the principle of *différance,* the trace marks absence of what has once been present but has moved on within the chain of signifiers. The trace is thus not purely present or absent.

In the same passage in "Economimesis', Derrida (1981b:9) refers to the artist as "an author-subject" or even "an artist-god", seemingly in direct reference to Plato who in the *Republic*, refers to the artist as "an ordinary man" unable to really create. Instead, Derrida equates the human artist with the divine one, because the copy is a new and separate production instead of an imitation.

Derrida revises the traditional notion of mimesis-as-imitation, because mimesis is the production of two things. This challenges the notion of the subject as origin of the portrait-copy; instead, both are separate original productions. The hierarchical dualistic relationship between the copy and the original is undermined, or even reversed. This reversal provides the opportunity to question the apartheid representations of people according to essential racial characteristics. Derrida speaks about this hierarchical reversal in *Positions,* (1981a:41)

> [...] in classical philosophical opposition we are not dealing with the peaceful coexistence of a 'vis-a-vis', but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the two terms governs the other (axiologically, etc.), or has the upper hand. To deconstruct the oppositions, first of all, is to overturn the hierarchy at a given moment. To overlook this phase of overturning is to forget that conflictual and subordinating structure of opposition. Therefore one might proceed too quickly to a 'neutralisation' that 'in practice' would leave the previous field untouched, leaving one no hold on the previous opposition, thereby preventing any means of 'intervening' in the field effectively.

Derrida (1989:22) shows that the process of mimesis is actually irreconcilable with the notion of an origin, which it values so much. Because of movement and play involved in mimeses, difference is inevitably created instead of similarity or

representation. Difference and play are created when mimesis removes the copy from the original instead of reconciling them (Derrida 1989:22). The fact that mimesis 'chases' the original in its attempt at faithful imitation, not only involves the idea of *play* but also becomes caught up in an endless process of substitution without a teleological origin or end. Lacoue-Labarthe (1989:116), agrees that mimesis involves endless substitutions, since it has no essence. Lacoue-Labarthe (1989-116) states that any attempt to define mimesis would be contrary to its true nature as play because mimesis has no essence:

> what is 'proper' to mimesis did not lie precisely in the fact that mimesis has no 'proper' to it, ever (so that mimesis does not consist in the improper, either, or in who knows what 'negative' essence, but *ek-sists*, or better yet, 'de-sists' in this appropriation of everything supposedly proper that necessarily jeopardises property 'itself').

The true nature of mimesis is that of endless and groundless "substitution and *circulation*" (*vicarius*), "the very lapse 'itself' of essence" (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989:16).

In relation to portraiture, this quote addresses the lacuna inside the sitter where the essence once was. The mimetic process is in perpetual motion since it does not have a clear beginning in the sitter or a definite end in the portrait. Thus, anybody "who signals himself" through either language or portraiture is already a *mimos*, a representation of other representations. Instead of true representation, mimesis creates a phantasm, a deceptive appearance, the "*presence* of a spectre"; what Derrida refers to as a hauntology rather than an ontology (Derrida 1994:10).[8] This hauntology is more powerful than an ontology of Being. The portrait as a 'hauntology' is already empty since the sitter has moved on within the chain of substitutions. This view stands in opposition to Plato's 'participation' of the one term within the other; of the copy within the original. It counters Gadamer's notion of methexis as participation, because the copy cannot access the original**.** It is, however, argued later on in this chapter that Derrida's terms of *différance*, the trace, play and the supplement are in fact operative in methexis, since there has to be difference in order for two entities (self and world; copy and original) to exist. To return to the discussion on hauntology, the term *phantasm* originally meant 'to make visible' (Latin *phantazein*) but later

[8] Regarding the notion of hauntology, Maley (2014:7) asserts that the idea of the 'self', for Derrida, is a ghost. The 'self' is in fact "[t]he first ghost we are host to". Maley (2014:7) asserts that the notion of absence is ghostly. This ghostly absence also refers to the author of a text or the subject of a portrait who is not present anymore. Portraiture is a good example of 'hauntology', because neither the artist nor the subject is present anymore.

changed to signify a 'deceptive appearance' (Phantasm 2014). This etymology of the word points to the collapse of presence (visibility) and absence (deceptive appearance). This paradox is also evident in the portrait as both presence and absence of the sitter. It is precisely this absent presence that Derrida refers to as the *trace*. The portrait is thus not a full sign, but a *trace* of the sitter's absent presence. This reminds of Lacoue-Labarthe's identification of an "abyssal 'logic" within all structures of identification and (self-) representation (Fynsk 1998:viii), including portraiture. Mimesis thus creates a gap in its efforts to create closure.

This play of difference is also at play in the sitter. Lacoue-Labarthe (1998:16) refers to the notion of '(de)constitution' to explain this idea. Derrida (1998:16) quotes Lacoue-Labarthe and points out that the word 'déserter', which means 'to desert', is an apt description of the subject's 'deconstitution':

> [...] what is *also* at play in the subject, while being absolutely irreducible to some subjectivity [...] what, in the subject, 'deserts' (has always already deserted) the subject *itself*, and which, prior to any 'self-possession' (and following another mode than that of dispossession), is the dissolution, the defeat of the subject or as the subject, the (de)constitution of the subject, or the loss of the subject - if it were possible, that is, to conceive of the loss of what one has never had, a kind of 'originary' and 'constitutive' loss (of 'self').

This loss of self, the notion that there is no centre to the self is possibly liberating in a post-apartheid milieu.[9] Individual identity would no longer be equated to racial identity. Because "mimesis is operative from the beginning" (Derrida 1998:29), a supposed essence cannot be arrested in the portrait. Like mimesis itself, the sitter has no essence because (s)he is a substitute, an imitation of something or someone else. Through *différance*, Derrida ensures that meaning cannot be created through a fixed set of oppositions (Hall 2004:120). Instead, it is located in an endless chain of differences, always moving within the chain. The process of movement creates difference and play. Movement, difference and play undermine the structure of both the portrait and the subject. In this regard, Derrida (1997:278) asserts that:

> [...] structure [...] has always been neutralised or reduced, and this by a process of giving it a centre or of referring it to a point of presence, a fixed origin. The function of this centre was not only to orient, balance,

[9] It is important to note that the official end of apartheid in 1994 did not erase racial classification at once. Many South Africans identify race as core to their identities. As discussed elsewhere in this study, racial classification is still used in an attempt to counter the effects of the previous government's system of racial taxonomy.

> and organise the structure - one cannot in fact conceive of an unorganised structure - but above all to make sure that the organising principle of the structure would limit what we might call the *play* of the structure.

Play is not entirely meaningless, but because discourse is potentially never-ending, one has to create an arbitrary pause in order to state anything meaningful (Hall 2004:121). Hall (2004:121) asserts that "[o]f course every full stop is provisional ... It's not forever, not totally universally true. It's not underpinned by infinite guarantees. But just now this is what I mean; this is who I am ... Full stop. OK". In this regard, the portrait could be seen as the temporary 'full stop' in the sentence that is the person's life. The portrait arguably limits the play and fluidity present within the subject. In order to be present as a stable entity, the portrait frames the sitter within its static boundaries. It excludes non-essential aspect in order to provide the impression of a coherent subject. The portrait is thus the parergon that or delimits unrequired surplus by exclusion. The aspects that are represented becomes central to the sitter's notion of self.[10] This exclusion of what is other is fundamental to the construction of the notion of the stable self. Derrida notes that "[t]he centre also closes off the play which it opens up and makes possible. [...] As centre, it is the point at which the substitution of contents, elements or terms is no longer possible" (Derrida 1997b:279). In this regard, Derrida (1997b:279) famously asserts that "[t]he centre is not the centre". Because the centre constitutes the structure, it also is not subjected to the structure and the centre is, therefore, located not in the totality but "the totality has its centre elsewhere" (Derrida 1997b:279).

> The concept of centred structure is in fact the concept of a play based on a fundamental ground, a play which itself is beyond the reach of play. And on the basis of this certitude anxiety can be mastered, for anxiety is invariably the result of a certain mode of being implicated in the game, of being caught by the game [...] (Derrida 1997b:279).

Following this logic, the process of portraiture could be argued to be teleological in nature since it finds its 'transcendental' origin (*archē*) in the subject and its end (*telos*) in the portrait. The traditional portrait is thus part of the eschatology that Derrida (1997b:279-280) refers to because "like that of any eschatology [...] attempts to

[10] The logic of the parergon is that the 'frame' is part of the work and outside of it simultaneously (Derrida 1987:9).

conceive of structure on the basis of a full presence which is beyond play". Derrida (1997:279-280) asserts that:

> [s]uccessively, and in a regulated fashion, the centre receives different forms or names. The history of metaphysics, like the history of the West, is the history of these metaphors and metonymies. Its matrix [...] is the determination of Being as presence in all senses of this word. It could be shown that all the names related to fundamentals, to principles, or to the centre have always designated an invariable presence - *eidos*, *archē*, *telos*, *energeia*, *ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject) *alētheia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man, and so forth.

Derrida thus questions classical 'onto-mimetology' - an ontology of being - by the introduction of *différance* as the principle which "makes presence possible while at the same time making it differ from itself" (Royle 2003:71). According to Richard Brilliant (1987:171), *différance* is operative in portraiture because the portrait-representation, in order to be a representation, has to be different and other to the sitter. Had it not been different, it would be the thing itself. Difference is what makes it a portrait and not the sitter.[11] The notion of *différance* fissures presence (Derrida 1973b:88), also in the portrait. The above discussion makes it clear that Derrida regard Platonic mimesis as imitation; a process that needs to be deconstructed. He disrupts this process by means of his theories of *différance,* the supplement, play, and the trace. These theories question the linearity of Platonic mimesis and introduce a circularity instead. To Derrida, there is only movement within the chain of signification. Movement and play that leaves traces instead of capturing presence. Derrida also replaces the copy/original dichotomy with that of two productions. Mimesis cannot create a copy, it creates another original production. It will be argued below that Derrida's deconstruction of mimetology, and Gadamer's (re)interpretation of Plato's mimesis amount to a similar process of circular play. Derrida's questioning of structuralism, in *Of Grammatology* for example was published in 1967, and preceded Gadamer's *Truth and method* by seven years. It could be argued that the notion of truth had to be undermined first, before it could be replaced by means of meaning created through participation (methexis or *μέθεξις*).

5.4 Gadamer on mimesis: methexis, an ontological event

[11] Spivak (1997a:xvii) states that "[t]he structure of the sign is determined by the trace or track of that other which is forever absent. This other is of course never to be found in its full being".

[m]imesis is enacted, it is not a mirror; [...]
In other words, imitation alters
(Parsons 2009).

Unlike Derrida, Hans-Georg Gadamer does not seem to regard Platonic mimesis as pure imitation. To him, Platonic mimesis has never been intended as a linear process imitation. The original therefore does not necessarily precedes the copy. Gadamer and Derrida's ideas on mimesis are quite similar, but follow different routes of getting there. Whereas Derrida has to deconstruct mimesis, Gadamer reads Plato's mimesis in a revised manner. For Gadamer, mimesis (*μίμησις*) is just another word for *methexis* (*μέθεξις*) (Fuyarchuk 2015:[sp]). Derrida and Gadamer concur that the one mimetic entity does not precede the other. According to Derrida, the reason for this is that mimesis creates 'two productions' instead of a copy. Gadamer argues that the reason for the mimetic impossibility is that the two terms (original and copy) participate in each other.[12] Derrida is negative about Platonic mimesis, but Gadamer's magnum opus *Truth and method* (2006) [1975] celebrates mimesis. Gadamer arguably taps into the following interpretation of Plato's mimesis. Plato's *Phaedo* (360 B.C.E) (1993:100) states that "if anything is beautiful besides absolute beauty it is beautiful for no other reason than because it partakes [...] of absolute beauty; and this applies to everything". According to Aldridge (2014:20), this is the meaning of methexis. Methexis is what provides access to the divine.

Schweiker (1988:81-82) credits Gadamer for providing the proper vocabulary to understand mimesis. Both Derrida and Gadamer associate movement as characteristic of mimesis. Gadamer's 'mimetic action' is not static as in traditional mimetology. It entails *Spiel*, which is interactive and it has a temporal dimension "because it exists in performance" (Schweiker 1988:25). *Spiel* does not exist outside of its figuration (*Gebilde*) or embodiment (Schweiker 1988:26). The world therefore does not pre-exist our interpretation (Parsons 2009). In a similar logic, the 'self' does not exist outside of its portrait. As Schweiker (1988:26) asserts:

> the self [...] and its world are mimetically presented, in the festive act of interpretation, not as 'substances' but as performances that may appear ever different and yet the same. Gadamer thus removes the notion of mimesis away from pure imitation and towards the realm ofaction.

[12] Gadamer restores the performative element of mimesis. Greek philosophy became distanced from the original idea of mimesis as dramatic act: "to bring to representation through dance" (*mimeisthai*). Through mimesis (mimetic act), myth, the human being and the god were brought together in understanding (Schweiker 1990:56).

Gadamer revised mimesis as *methexis* – a being with or *participation* of two previous separate entities (reality and representation) (Gadamer 2006:xiv). Methexis, according to Gadamer (2007:311), entails the reconceptualization of the static mimetic spatiality as well as the linear temporality of Platonic mimesis. Gadamer (2007:311) explains:

> '[m]imesis' always points in the direction of that which one approaches, or towards which one is orientated, when one represents something. *Methexis* however, as the Greek *meta* already signifies, implies that the one thing is there together with something else. Participation [...] completes itself ... only in genuine being-together and belonging-together [...].

The significance of this view for portraiture is that it gains ontological valence, because it gives birth to aspects of the subject that did not exist prior to the representation. The presence or identity of the subject is thus generated in the portrait, and transferred to the subject.[13] Through the portrait, the spectator views the sitter and that aspect emphasised by the portrait becomes 'real'. Also, the sitter views him or herself according to the representation, and mimetically absorbs this portrait-self. The image not only creates a mirror for understanding the self, but it also gives rise to aspects not already inherent in the subject. This is one of the reasons why apartheid portraits are so damaging; the iconic portrayal becomes part of the subject through involuntary mimesis. If an image is damaging, the person becomes damaged.[14] Schweiker (1990:82) agrees that the mimetic act has repercussions in the realm of understanding and consciousness. It has the power to fuse horizons: "[a]nd all this, Gadamer contends, takes place in language" (Schweiker 1990:82). Therefore, as Derrida would agree, there is not an objective world outside of representation. The following quotation by Gadamer provides insight into his understanding of mimesis:

> Mimesis here does not mean making something after (*nachahmend*) something already known, but, rather, bringing something to presentation (*etwas zur Darstellung bringen*) so that it is present in this way in sensual fullness. The ancient use of these words was derived

[13] Gadamer (2006:130) writes of the 'ontological valence of the picture'. The "mode of being of a picture" could be understood through the notion of play (Gadamer 2006:131).

[14] The importance of mimetic representation came to the fore when it was thought that the American singer and actress Beyoncé Knowles would play the role of Saartjie Baartman film (Donaldson 2016). Donaldson jokingly refers to the new positive emphasis as 'neo-steatopygism', an emphasis endorsed by Kim Kardashian West, Beyoncé and other celebrities. He refers to Kardashian West's champagne glass on her derrière as a direct allusion to Saartjie Baartman, who was known for these type of 'tricks' (Donaldson 2016).

> from the dance of the stars. The stars are the presentation of pure mathematical laws and proportions that mark the order of the heavens. In this sense the tradition, I believe, is right when it says' art is always a mimesis', i.e., brings something to presentation (Gadamer cf Schweiker 1990:56).

Mimesis then is the process in which something is brought to presentation (Schweiker 1990:56). Reality is presented and also altered by art; this figuration (*Gebilde*), Gadamer claims, is the transformation into the true: "[w]hat 'is' is brought to light" by art (Schweiker 1990:57). In mimetic presentation (*Darstellung*) the energy of the artwork becomes almost autonomous, because "[b]y coming to presentation a new meaningfulness and presence are given to the presented" (Gadamer cf Schweiker 1990:57). In other words, it increases the being of what it presents (Gadamer 2006:135). Mimesis is therefore according to Schweiker (1990:57), the link between human and world that creates understanding.

For this reason, Schweiker (1990:81) asserts that "Gadamer's mimetic strategy virtually destroys traditional imitation theory [...]". Mimesis as participation, or methexis is evident when Gadamer (2006:432) asserts that the manner in which something appears, or presents itself is part of its being. Gadamer rejects the notion of mimesis as representation and as *adequatio*. Gadamer (cf Schweiker 1990:58) asserts that:

> [m]imesis is and remains an original relationship (*Urverhältnis*] in which there appears not so much an imitation (*Nachahmung*) as perhaps a transformation (*Verwandlung*). It is, as I have called it in another connection with art, aesthetic non-differentiation (*die ästhetische Nichtunderscheidung*) that marks the experience of art [...] When we revive this original meaning of mimesis, we are liberated from the aesthetic construction that the classical theory of imitation (*Nachahmungstheorie*) meant for thought. Mimesis is not so much something that refers to another thing, that is, its archetype (*Urbild*), as that something is indeed in itself as *Sinnhaftes* (full-of-meaning).

Mimesis is therefore understood as being more than mere imitation. According to Schweiker (1990:58), "[m]imesis is a presentation of some subject matter through figuration, a work of art or image". Gadamer (cf Schweiker 1990:58) asserts that "[m]imetic presentation is not *Spiel* that simulates; rather, it is a *Spiel* that communicates itself, so that it is known for nothing else than its possibility to be; pure presentation".

It is possibly for this reason that Gadamer's theories are viewed as metaphysical. Gadamer (2006:113) seems to retrieve the notion of (mimetic) truth when he states that: "[w]hen a person imitates something, he allows what he knows to exist and to exist in the way that he knows it". Gadamer (2006:128) writes that when the spectator recognises that which is represented, participation becomes inevitable. Here, it seems that the act of 'recognition' provides the truth value of a representation. Gadamer (2006:271) highlights the existence of "fore-meanings and prejudices" or bias present in the viewer, which arguably may interfere with the 'recognition' of an aspect of somebody's being.

Gadamer (2006:113) provides the example of a child who plays dress-up, and states that the child is not trying to hide his or her true self behind the disguise. Instead, the play brings the representation into existence. The idea of recognition is crucial here to imitation because the spectator has to recognise the 'essence' of what is imitated. In this regard, Gadamer (2006:113) asserts that "[...] what we experience in a work of art and what invites our attention is how true it is – i.e., to what extent one knows and recognises something and oneself". Gadamer (2006:113-114) explains recognition in the following manner:

> But we do not understand what recognition is in its profoundest nature if we only regard it as knowing something again that we know already – i.e. what is familiar is recognised again. The joy of recognition is rather the joy of knowing more than is already familiar. In recognition what we know emerges, as if illuminated, from all the contingent and variably circumstances that condition it; it is grasped in its essence. It is known as something [...] The 'known' enters into its true being and manifests itself as what it is only when it is recognised. As recognised, it is grasped in its essence, detached from its accidental aspects.

Gadamer uses the example of an actor who vanishes when what he or she represents is recognised (2006:114). Because of this vanishing act, Gadamer (2006:114) regards the representation (*mimesis*) not as a secondary copy but as "a bringing forth" (Gadamer 2006:114). According to McIntyre (cf Warnke 2003:59), this new manner of seeing is recognised as familiar, "recognising it as a crucial aspect of what we always saw". Traditional representation or the idea that one thing stands for something else (Potolsky 2006:164) collapses.

Methexis, as I interpret it, leads to a practice of democratic and potentially endless participation. In my view, a "chain of participation" is created since identity endlessly forms and leaves aspects behind. The portrait-image is the space in which

this new self is formed, and it is also left behind by the self. Mimesis is involved in recognising what to imitate in the first place, imitating the chosen aspect, and it also involves the idea that the imitated aspect is recognised "as what we always saw" (Warnke 2003:59). Mimesis becomes an ontological event, a process of becoming. No longer is there a hierarchy between copy and original, and the notion of 'pure' imitation subsequently disappears. This theory has implications regarding traditional mimetic space and time. The temporal delay in 'traditional' mimicry falls away because the original and copy merge in order to become an ontological event. The spatiality is also no longer of imitator and the imitated. Instead, these terms collapse because the one does not precede the other. There is thus no delay between 'authentic identity' and 'becoming'. There is only participation of both terms in one another. Methexis then, in my view, leads to the notion of postmimicry, in which self and representation co-exist and the representation brings forth aspects of the self, which has always seemed to be there.

5.5 Conclusion

Whereas Plato conceptualised the world as 'being out there', and mimesis as a reflective process, Derrida and Gadamer argue that mimesis is performative. Derrida undermines classical mimetology by means of *différance*, which initiates a process of endless movement and play along the chain of signifiers. This entails that the portrait can only capture traces of the sitter's long gone presence. The portrait therefore is the advent of the sitter, but simultaneously marks the absence of the sitter. Gadamer also revisits Platonic mimesis, but he proposes that methexis has always been inherent in mimesis. Methexis shows reality in a way that is not possible without the representation. 'Reality' emerges through the mediation of the representation. The portrait is an arbitrary pause along the chain of the sitter's possibilities. The representation is not the sitter, because the sitter has left the scene; it is a trace that provides a glimpse into the sitter's (absent) presence. This process could be seen as inherent in Gadamer's methexis. Where Derrida and Gadamer would differ however, is on the notion of *différance*. Because of the principle of *différance*, the copy cannot access the original. Gadamer on the other hand conceptualises mimesis as undifferentiated because of participation. Therefore, a collapse of self and portrait-other, in favour of participation. One could however argue that there can be no act of participation without separate entities. Gadamer's 'participation' needs difference in

order to fuse together in understanding. Methexis brings to mimesis a participatory dimension since desired qualities are 'out there' in the 'world'. These aspects are recognised by an individual as desirable and then imitated. Methexis is the process in which the individual participates in the quality (beautiful, powerful, accomplished etc.), and the quality participates likewise in the individual. Methexis then adds to the 'mimetic' process the notion of participation. When that quality is recognised in the individual by outsiders, this quality is regarded as 'essential' to the person. Imitation and play reveal the person as he or she has always been.

To conclude this discussion on mimesis, Derrida (1981b:5) asserts that "[t]he notion of mimesis is a humanistic one and according to Aristotle "only man is capable of *mimesis*". Mimesis "is there to raise man up [ériger l'homme], that is, always to erect a man-god, to avoid contamination from 'below'". The next chapter aims to show how the representation participates in the sitter through methexis. The chapter ends with the speculation that the notion of methexis takes portraiture to its 'logical conclusion', which is beyond the boundaries of the representational portrait-other.

CHAPTER SIX

METHEXIST PARTICIPATION: THE PORTRAIT, THE SELF AND THE WORLD

the self needs, in order to exist, to be
repeated in visual echoes
(Delumeau 2014:xi).

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the transformation of the linear and static process of mimesis into the dynamic and participatory process of methexis. This process characterises the ontological nature of the sitter's presence in the portrait. It has been argued in Chapter Two that the genre of portraiture is inextricably linked with mimesis (West 2004:12). The portraits discussed in Chapter Two simply desired to establish the sitter's presence and maintain it in the afterlife. The Fayum portrait of Roman Egypt produced during first and second century AD exemplifies the "pragmatic use of likeness" to facilitate the re-embodiment of the subject after death (West 2004:63). The self-portraits of Van Eyck and Dürer exemplify the desire to become present through defining the sitter as an individual, and to ensure that he remains present. Although the portraits of both Van Eyck and Dürer are characterised by the propensity towards presence, their understanding of the notion of presence arguably differed. In Van Eyck's portraits, the notion of presence referred to a corporeal presence, evident in the portrayal of the sitter's bodily likeness. As noted by West (2004:24), the focus of Van Eyck was on "microscopic and penetrating analysis of facial features" (West 2004:57). Even though individual character traits such as dignity for example, are also portrayed, his portraits often have a more 'documentary' nature (West 2004:57). The notion of identity in terms of character, personality and gender for example, is a result of seventeenth century philosophical enquiries. The portraits of Albrecht Dürer could be viewed as a very early precursor of individual presence. Although Dürer also produced detailed paintings like Van Eyck, his focus was the representation of his personality and his social identity (West 2004:167). He also depicted his status of health, as well as his emotional state of happiness in the self-portrait he gave to Agnes, his fiancée in 1943 (West 2004:167). His self-portrait of

1498 in which he dressed like a nobleman raises his social status. He raises his status even more by his reference to Christ in his self-portrait of 1500 (West 2004:167). Therefore, although Van Eyck's portraits could be said to be imbued with spirituality, they arguably do not present the sitter as an individual agent, the product of economic, technical, and philosophical forces, in the manner of Dürer. The developmental stages of the notion of the individual are also marked by a change in how the individual's presence is represented in the portrait. Therefore, changes in formative aspects of the individual throughout history, alters how the individual becomes present in the portrait. For example, when the human being became defined as an individual through the humanist philosophy and the judicial system (first in Ancient Rome, and then during the rediscovery of Roman Law in the Renaissance), the desire to immortalise the new legal subject through symbolic means, became evident in portraiture. Humanism, as interpreted by Thomas Carlyle, during the Victorian era reiterated the importance of the individual's presence in the portrait by regarding the portrait as the 'face of history'. The portrait became inadvertently political, because it provided a specific face to history with the aim of instilling patriotism and national unity to the increasingly alienated industrial Victorian worker (Art and Nationalism in London Museums: Representing Britain 2016). The portraits in the National Portrait Gallery which was established during the Victorian era, provided precisely such a nationalistic 'face of history'.[1] The gap present in the mimetic process, between copy and its original became infused with ideology. During colonialism, the South African landscape was facialised by increasing international economic and political ventures. British colonial activities in South Africa (for example the 1795 British annexation of the Cape and the arrival in 1820 of British settlers) prompted previously fragmented Afrikaner groups to unite and develop as a separate entity. The purpose of the separation of Afrikaners during the Great Trek was arguably self-preservation

[1] The National Portrait Gallery was opened in London during the Victorian period, in 1896. It hosts portraits of influential and prominent British subjects, such as William Shakespeare (1564-1616), portrayed in the Chandos portrait, a bust of Humanist philosopher Thomas Carlyle and portraits of Queen Victoria amongst other influential historical British figures. The gallery states that it "[...] commissions about six portraits a year as part of its commitment to collecting portraits of those who have made an important contribution to British history and culture" (National portrait gallery 2016). Sitters depicted are those who contributed to Britain's progress and the National Portrait Gallery's commissioning policy is thus characterised by nationalistic sentiments (Art and Nationalism in London Museums: Representing Britain 2016).

in the face of real or perceived threatening activities. Under the leadership of Paul Kruger, the advent of nationalistic views that arguably culminated in the formation of the apartheid state was beginning to take shape. As previously indicated, official portraits of Paul Kruger, such as the one by Enrico Rinaldi, capture his personal presence that is retrospectively conflated with his political persona. The initial metaphysics of presence, established during the early Renaissance to the Victorian era is here transformed into a political presence. All portraits are arguably politically motivated, not only the colonial ones discussed in Chapter Three. As argued by Mitchell (1984:504), images ought to be regarded as:

> [...] a kind of language: instead of providing a transparent window on the world, images are now regarded as the sort of sign that presents a deceptive appearance of naturalness and transparence concealing an opaque, distorting, arbitrary mechanism of representation, a process of ideological mystification.

In retrospect and from the vantage point of the present, one could however discern between portraits which are motivated by the aim to 'merely' render the sitter present, as opposed to portraits that have overt political aspirations. These political portraits aim to change the face of history. Portraits discussed in Chapter Two at first glance therefore seem more *unmotivated* than the anthropological portraits discussed in Chapter Three. Mitchell (1986:58) states that an unmotivated sign is arbitrary, a motivated sign has a "natural, necessary connection with what they signify". Transposed to the focus of this study, it could therefore be argued that the portraits discussed in Chapter Two seem politically 'unmotivated', since their ideological aspirations are not the *raison d'être* for their existence, nor is this dimension immediately apparent upon contemplation.

The politics of likeness, which was discussed in Chapter Three, arguably facialises the Other in a familiar and generalised manner, in order for the European to obtain a clear picture of himself. The politics of likeness assigned fixed characteristics to 'unknown' racial groups, in order to provide them with a familiar face. To this effect, praxis related to physiognomy, phrenology and physical anthropology became apparatuses of facialisation. Mimesis, identified as responsible for realising the politics of likeness, is rejected by artist post-1994. Because mimesis defines the ontological nature of traditional portraiture, its rejection entails the rejection of

representation. The anti-mimetic portraits of Geers, Dumas, Hugo and Strydom for example, seem to exploit the mimetic gap between presence and absence. Instead of searching for full presence, the aforementioned portraits capture the traces of the once present subject. The mimetic gap is purposefully widened, and its widening is recognised as a political tool of resistance. The aforementioned artists arguably identify mimetology as a repressive colonial practice. Geers and Strydom arguably produce portraits that are in excess of the sitter, due to the logic of the *supplément*. The portrait-as-*supplément* aims to substitute the sitter. But instead of becoming a complete substitution, the portrait becomes additional (and other) to the sitter.

The portraits discussed in Chapter Four therefore disrupt the historical chain of South African mimesis. This break in mimetology also represents a deeper historical rupture, namely the rejection of the colonial past. The relationship between the sitter and the portrait is thus that of *différance*, because the sitter becomes a *supplément* and contains traces of external influences. In other words, the artist substitutes his own facial features with foreign ones. As already discussed, Geers' *Self-portrait* (1995) consists of an imported Heineken beer bottle, and Strydom digitally substitutes his facial features for a scar, obtained from another part of his own or someone else's body. True to the nature of the *supplément*, the portraits are temporary placeholders. They seem to embrace the inevitable *différance* instead of trying to re-embody of the sitter. This arguably communicate a (mis)identification with the Western Self. These substituted objects create what Gadamer (2006:142) refers to as an "increase of being" as opposed to mimetically reflecting a pre-existing identity.

The aim of the current chapter is to discuss the presence of methexis in selected South African selfies. These selfies include those by Tony Gum and Karabo Poppy Moletsane. This chapter aims to link the democratic and participatory nature of methexis with that of the interactive, popular, and even democratic nature of the selfie (Du Preez 2013:297). As will be argued later in this chapter, mimesis becomes assimilated into the praxis of methexis instead of being categorically rejected. This assimilation of mimesis into methexis is potentially liberating because the linear trajectory of mimesis gives way to open-ended signification. This means that there is no fixed 'model' of identity for the sitter to imitate. The selfie becomes more than a mimetic reflection of its sitter's presence. It increases the subject's being and becomes the *advent* of the sitter's presence (Van Alphen 1997:240). The portrait as advent of the sitter is not entirely new, but linked with the notion of omnipresence characterised

by the selfie, it adds an entirely new dimension to the notion of presence. The selfie creates the illusion of the sitter's omnipresence, due to the immediacy of digital self presentation, in fact, the "selfie is a tribute to the immediate" and it is "all about now – an eternal present – now happening to you, to me, everywhere, everybody – all at the same time" (Saltz cf Heideman 2016). Its immediacy also derives from the frequency at which these images are shared via social media platforms (Du Preez 2013:283). Omnipresence entails that the viewer is immediately aware of profile image updates or social media alerts. The selfie therefore intrudes into the recipient's private space, unlike traditional portraits. The selfie's omnipresence includes the fact that the digital selfie is continuously reproduced on countless devices, whereas the portrait exists as a singular entity. The sitter's new omnipresence is interweaved with supplemental aspects such as power and popularity, created by the nature and possibilities of the social media platform. These additional aspects that 'define' the subject includes 'likes', comments, 'friends or 'followers'. This ability of the medium to create the illusion of a popular presence necessitates a brief contextualisation of the selfie as a presentation of a narcissistic presence. This type of presence is particularly evident in the (in)famous selfies of Kim Kardashian West. This chapter concludes with how the selfie undermines past racial tropes. It arguably bridges the gap between Self and Other; representation and presentation. Methexis is thus not only an aesthetic practice. It is argued that in the South African context its participatory nature is transposed into a 'political' one of interactivity with democratic underpinnings. This chapter aims to discuss the trilateral nature of methexis. Methexist participation includes technical participation granted by the accessibility of the medium. Technical accessibility creates aesthetic participation, which includes the appropriation of existing images. Finally, methexis entails political participation in rewriting (stereotypical) unilateral portrayals of the past. The sitter is thus able to participate in his or her own identity. The methexist selfies also go beyond the stereotypical African 'collectivism' and presents the individual presence of the subject. The discussion now turns towards a brief contextualisation of the selfie in terms of its methexist nature.

6.2 The selfie: A brief contextualisation

The international popularity of the selfie as a form of contemporary self-portraiture was showcased when the term was chosen by Oxford Dictionaries as their word of the year 2013 (Brumfield 2013). The research programme of Oxford Dictionaries noticed

an increase of 17, 000% in the frequency of the usage of the word 'selfie' ('Selfie' named by Oxford Dictionaries as word of 2013).[2] The increase in the use of the word is partly due to its migration from its existence in popular parlance to academic discourse. An example of its academic acceptance is the Selfies Research Network, established by Terri Senft in 2014.[3] The popular (or lowbrow) nature of the selfie however, could be traced to its origin.[4] The word first appeared on 13 September 2002 when an Australian citizen posted a photograph of a highly inebriated self accompanied by the following text:

> Um, drunk at a mate's 21st, I tripped ofer [*sic*] and landed lip first (with front teeth coming a very close second) on a set of steps. I had a hole about 1 cm long right through my bottom lip. And sorry about the focus, it was a selfie" (Brumfield 2013).

According to the Oxford Dictionaries (2015), the term 'selfie' refers to "a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and shared via social media". A selfie is thus a form of self-portraiture that materialises through digital technologies.

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[2] The research programme, Oxford Dictionaries New Monitor Corpus gathers 150 million words that are used on a monthly basis. The software program helps to identify the emergence of new words and also changes in its usage in relation to geographical location and frequency. This word is not automatically added to the dictionary because its longevity has not been proven yet (Oxford Dictionaries word of the year: Frequently asked questions 2015).

[3] The Selfies Research Network consists of international scholars focusing solely on the selfie as form of expression; it boasts publications, and academic lectures, such as 'The Selfie Course' (a six week syllabus complete with class room exercises). The network even launched a separate Selfies Pedagogy Workshop in June 2015 (Scholars studying selfies 2015).

[4] The popular and democratic nature of the selfie is evident in the abundance of easily accessible instructional manuals related to this popular art form. These manuals are clearly aimed at a mass-market, judging from the subject matter, language and style. An example here is *How to take the best selfies* (2013) by Sarah Sloboda, which offers the following very basic definition of the term: "[a] selfie is slang for a 'self-portrait', popularised in the digital age, especially on Instagram, as people began to document themselves and their lives by including themselves in their smartphone photos". The frivolous and temporary nature of this form of portrait becomes apparent when Sloboda (2013) asserts that "I think the term is kind of cute. It's much more fun than the staid 'self-portrait which feels like it should be saved for significant artists' work hanging in galleries and museums". The dichotomy created here between selfie and traditional self-portrait is reiterated when she states that the selfie should not replace the formal head and shoulder portrait, but is meant to playfully represent one's everyday self.

6.2.1 Face-on: A selfish presence

Andy Warhol who is celebrated as the father of American Pop Art (Andy Warhol Museum 2002), is also referred to as the originator of the selfie (Golden 2015; Caldwell 2016). He is even dubbed the 'King of Selfies' (LaSane 2015). His utilisation of manufactured, instant and readily available photographic technologies such as the polaroid, photo booths, and commercial photographs for his self-portraits predate the instantaneous selfie. The fact that the selfie is produced for its exhibition value means that it does not aim to capture the subject's lasting presence or inner essence. Andy Warhol's analogue self-portraits are regarded as paving the way for selfies, due to their playful character. Unlike the traditional self-portrait that often exists as a singular and static work, the selfie according to Rettberg (2014:33), exists in a series.[5]

This cumulative nature of social media profile pictures negates the very notion of static mimesis, because the selfie profile picture is continuously viewed or uploaded onto social networking platforms. The increased pace of the production and consumption of the selfie results in a decrease of the interval in which the self constructs his or her desired presence. This self-construction is often based on the viewer's response. This process of immediately present interactivity lends the selfie the appearance of being unmediated.

Because of the instant nature of social media, selfies are increasingly curated. Curation is the "[...] activity of being mediator, producer, interface and neo-critic" (Gillick 2005:74 cf Rugg & Sedgwick 2012:14). These different roles are fulfilled by the person who takes a selfie. Unlike traditional self-portraiture, the person produces, mediates and curates the selfie. The selfie thus becomes an exhibition of one's presence to the world, and the exhibition value of the self becomes its primary goal. Because of its exhibition value, the selfie becomes a rhetorical device that portrays ephemeral aspects of the sitter instead of his or her 'essence' or lasting qualities.[6]

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[5] The traditional self-portrait can obviously also exist in a series, but the major difference here is the sense of immediacy created by the selfie. Examples of traditional self-portraits within a series are those by Rembrandt. The short intervals between the self-portraits and the capturing of stages of his life (and mood) has affinities with the selfie. In this sense, Rembrandt could perhaps be regarded as an early progenitor of the selfie. This view is reiterated by the curators of an exhibition of Rembrandt's self-portraits who state that "[n]o artist before Rembrandt, and very few since, have captured their likeness on canvas or paper so often as Rembrandt did" (Rembrandt's 'selfie' heads south 2014).

[6] Rugg and Sedgwick (2012:15&16) assert that an exhibition is a form of rhetoric, because it functions within a theme and communicates stipulated (or pre-digested) meaning to the viewer.

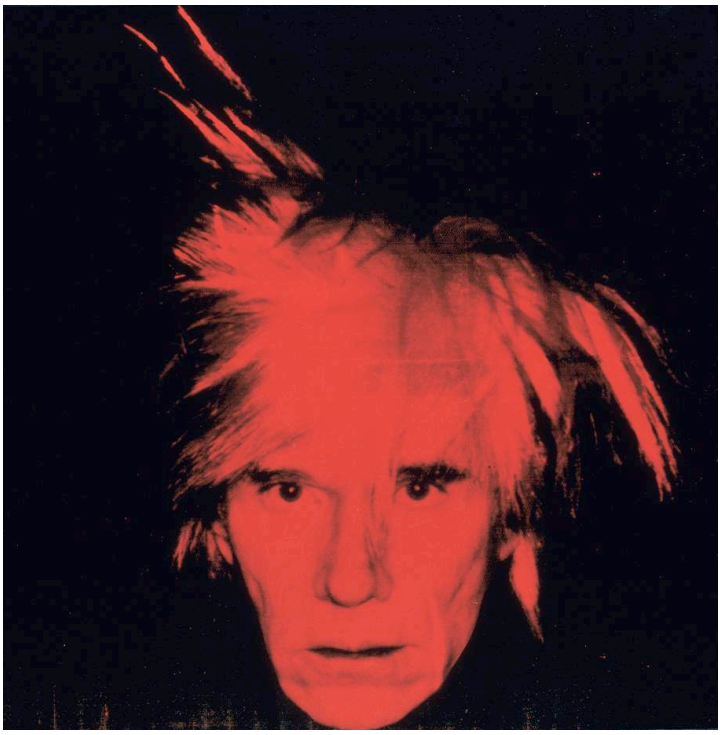

Figure 50: Andy Warhol, *Self-portrait*, 1986.
Synthetic polymer paint and silkscreen on canvas, 274.3 x 274.3 cm.
The Andy Warhol foundation for the visual arts, Fort Worth, London.
(The Andy Warhol foundation for the visual arts 2016).

Warhol produced variations of this self-portrait in a series of purple, red, orange, yellow, light pink, as well as light blue portraits. It could be argued that instead of representing his inner essence, Warhol's self-portraits mask his inner self. Warhol famously asserted that: "if you want to know all about Andy Warhol, just look at the surface of my paintings and films and me, and there I am. There is nothing behind it" (Shafrazi, Ratcliffe & Rosenblum 2007:19).

Figure 51: Andy Warhol, "Photograph of himself taking a photograph of himself", date unknown.
Polaroid photograph.
(Pinterest 2016)

The illustration above (Figure 51), represents Warhol who photographs himself in the act of taking his own photograph. If he wanted to capture a self-portrait that revealed his inner essence, he would have asked another person to take his picture. This would have exposed his facial features, enabling the viewer to read meaning into it. Instead, he photographs himself in a window, and the camera disguises his face. Because the photograph of him taking a photograph is taken by a third person, Warhol has his back turned to the viewer. He is clearly not interested in exposing his inner self to the scrutiny of the viewer. Warhol would arguably have taken a selfie had the technology been available at the time, because his aim here is the presentation of himself in the act of taking his own photograph. In contrast, the selfie thrives on the reverse camera option of the smartphone camera, which means that one can view one's image before taking it. Warhol's self-portrait (Figure 51) does not aim to reveal his inner essence, and neither do selfies. The *act* of taking the photograph becomes the meaning of the image. Therefore, the difference between the selfie and traditional self-portraiture is often the foregrounding of the act of capturing one's bodily presence in situ.

Figure 52: Andy Warhol, *Self-portrait[s] in drag*
[six separate works], 1981–1982.
Polaroid dye diffusion transfer print, 9.4 x 7.3 cm.
Private Collections.
(LaSane 2015).

According to Ted Mann (2016[sp]), Warhol was deeply interested in "artifice, role-playing and the construction of identity". In his numerous self-portraits, he was less interested in revealing himself than presenting a mask, just as he carefully cultivated a superficial, depthless celebrity persona in life".

The exhibitionism present in Warhol's self-portraits are taken to an extreme level in the selfies of quintessential exhibitionist Kim Kardashian West. Her book *Selfish* (2015) is a four hundred and forty four page book consisting of selfies. She selfishly bans the taking of selfies at the launch of her new book, and puts a monetary value of $20 on selfies in which she appears (National Post 2015). West arguably views the selfies as reflecting aspects of herself, since she arranges them in chronological order that parallels her life's progression. It could however be argued that the events in her life are 'staged', in order to exist as images. In other words, she captures her own image with the selfie as end-product in mind. Instead of the portrait being proleptic as in the case of Dürer's self-portrait that captures an identity that does not yet exist, Kardashian West becomes her own prolepsis in advance, and the selfie in this case seems to capture her constructed presence.

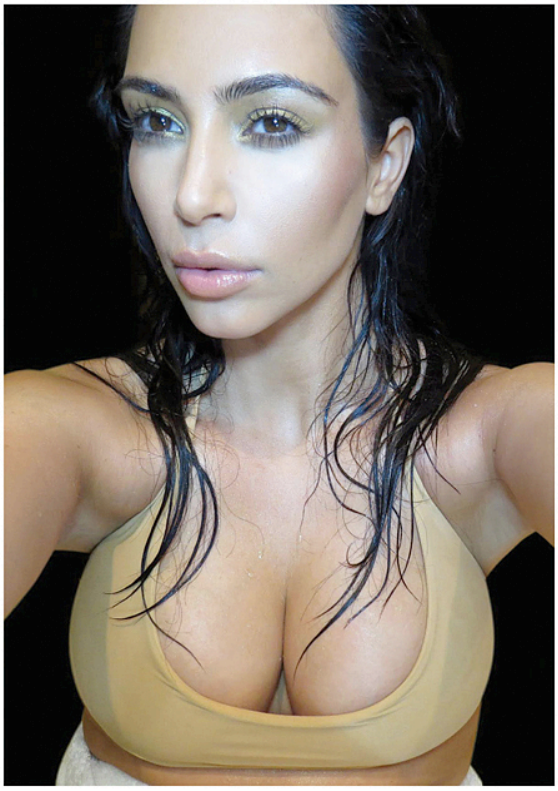

Figure 53: Kim Kardashian West, *Selfish* book cover, 2015.
Hardcover book, 13.6 x 4.3 x 18.3 cm.
(Barnes & Noble 2015).

Like the self-portraits of Warhol, Kardashian West's selfies, of which Figure 53 is an example, are depthless. The portrait and the self exist in a closed system of signification, because the self(ie) is both the image and the referent. This renders her selfies rhetorical. Kardashian West seems to exhaust the stylised poses available in her self(ie) repertoire. As Cindy Sherman before her, she arguably constructs her self-image according to pre-existing 'types'. The images of her chosen presence seem integrated into her being and her 'reality'. According to Flusser (2006:15), traditional portraits operate on a different and arguably deeper level (than the selfie) because one has to go 'into the painter's head' in order to decode the portrait. Kardashian West's portraits seem to derive their significance from available camera technologies, such as filters, the reverse camera option, and the selfie stick amongst others. These technologies arguably disrupt the relationship between image and its significance.

This disruption amplifies the postmodern depthlessness identified by Jameson. As noted by Garber (2015:[sp]), her appearance is created by means of industrial production and "Kim is inventing, in her way, a new strain of capitalism. Its currency is the selfie".[7] Flusser (2006:15) agrees by stating that "[t]echnical [selfie] images [...] appear to be on the same level of reality than their significance." Kardashian West flattens the distance between image and reality by using the selfie editing app Perfect 365 to digitally enhance her appearance before disseminating it for public consumption. This app is a digital make-up kit that can airbrush one's skin to appear flawless, apply eyeliner, whiten teeth, and even shape brows (Amos 2015; Cox 2015; Vazzana 2015). Methexist participation could be said to mark the ontological nature of this process, albeit on a skin-deep level. This aesthetic is thus characterised by narcissism. Kardashian West participates in the selfie, which in turn participates in the "self".

Notions such as vanity, narcissism and obviously selfishness (the title of her book) are mentioned in relation to her selfies (Bennet 2015:[sp]). Due to the continuous reference to narcissism in relation to the selfie, it is almost impossible not to refer to the mythological Narcissus. Narcissus was according to Greek mythology, a beautiful young man who fell in love with his own reflection in the water. This narrative arguably becomes the narrative of selfie. Both are arguably marked by a numbness (Narcissus derives from the Greek *narkē* or 'numbness") to reality and a concern with image.

According to the Greek myth, the blind seer Tiresias, prophesied that Narcissus will have a long life "If he never knows himself" (Spaas 2000:1). After drinking from the water of a spring, Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection. Ovid writes "[h]ow many times did he give vain kisses to the deceitful spring" (Spaas 2000:2). The story of Narcissus who wilted away by staring at his own image is arguably echoed by the self who (metaphorically) dies by gazing at the cell phone screen. The poser of the selfie wilts away by becoming an image. Like the departed Victorian subject of the death portrait whose body is arranged in a stilted pose, the

[7] Kim Kardashian West has been described as "the unlikely embodiment of Duchamp's urinal". Garber (2015[sp]) argues that she becomes art by virtue of declaring herself as such, and by so doing, her intention is to mock and provoke. It could however be argued that the classification of her selfies as Dadaist highlights the desperate attempt of some viewers to find meaning. Garber (20159:[sp]) states that "Kim's face is like a Duchamp urinal: in declaring itself as a kind of public art, it mocks and dares and provokes".

living selfie-subject forces his or her own body into a stifling pose. This act undermines the potential participatory and curatorial nature of the selfie. This is illustrated by Kardashian West's pose, illustrated in Figure 54 below, that is so typical of the selfie. The tilt of the head, the outstretched arm that holds the smartphone, and the infamous pout become rhetorical devices. These devices generate an effect, instead of communicating essential aspects of the poser to the viewer. They therefore *deflect* as opposed to *reflect* an inner 'essence'. The *Selfish* poser gazes upon herself and desires to be seen and recognised by the viewer in the way she intended. She gazes at her image on the smartphone camera screen, and the camera returns her gaze.

Figure 54: Kim Kardashian West's 'duckface' pout, 2015.
(Smith 2015).

With regards to the narcissistic gaze, (Spaas 2000:5) states that "the boy in the pool looks back at Narcissus and hence casts upon him the same inducing gaze. This looking back is revealing with regard to the activity of viewing". Looking back destabilises the subject's autonomy (Spaas 2000:5). An inevitable triangulation is created between self, selfie and the viewer, which is crucial to the meaning of the story of Narcissus (Spaas 2000:5). He looks at himself, his reflection looks back and

the viewer looks at both. This Narcissistic triangulation therefore lends the selfie its meaning. This process is foregrounded by social media. Spaas (2000:5) reiterates the exhibitionist nature of the selfie by asserting that "there is a need for a viewer, the need to be seen". It could be argued that although Kardashian West's selfies exhibit methexist characteristics of technical participation and playfulness, they remain mimetic. Mimetic linearity is retained due to the rhetorical dimension created by the poses that she imitates.[8] It could be argued that the methexist nature of the selfie comes to fruition when it truly participates in the social reality of its sitter instead of reflecting the sitter. An example of how the exhibitionist nature of the selfie is capitalised on to raise awareness of anti-racism during the South African Fees Must Fall events is discussed later in this chapter. The dialogue created by the selfies arguably highlights its methexist nature.

6.3 Selfies, digital selves and colonial presence: A face-off

This section discusses the manner in which the participatory nature of the selfie is exploited in a 'face off' between the aspects of the South African colonial past and the present. A face-off between mimesis and methexis is reflected in the face-off between likeness (symbolises colonial practices) and methexist participation (democratic portrayals). The blackface performances of Boglarka Balogh (Figure 55), and that of two South African students (Figure 56) became part of the polemic of likeness. This polemic highlights the discourse of race. A literal face-off between viewpoints of political groups prompted the likeness of colonial era statues (including Rhodes', Kruger's and Queen Victoria's) to be defaced. A figurative face-off derived from the Rhodes Must Fall Campaign, culminated in an attempt to produce democratic and participatory selfies.

[8] The selfie-portrait paintings by Michelle Leivan presents to the viewer her subjective presence, not unlike Rembrandt's self-portraits. Leivan painted a series of 100 self-portrait, capturing her subjective presence and changing mental states. The selfie-paintings have titles such as *Headache* or *Overwhelmed*. The artist claims that the mimetic process makes her view herself in a different light "[t]here were other days, as I continued to look at them in my studio (and) depending on my mood, that the expression would say something completely different" (Biles 2015[sp]). The participatory nature of the smartphone selfie is extended by the painting of the image. Methexis in this example leads to self-reflection. The reproduction of the existing image through the medium of painting means that the artist gazes at her selfie and tries to align her facial expression with her emotion. This she found impossible to do because the moment has passed, and new feelings regarding herself has arisen. The introduction of the painterly medium re-introduces the element of time and the gaze. The contemplation of one's own image can thus also have a stabilising effect, arguably when the image is primarily taken for oneself as opposed to one's 'market' or peers.

A brief discussion of the repressive blackface portrayal, taken with cell phone camera technologies follows. Blackface portrayals exemplify the resurfacing of the politics of likeness. It showed its face not only in South Africa, but also internationally.[9] Like repressive anthropological portraits, blackface affirms the 'superior' presence of the European vis-à-vis the 'inferior' presence of the 'ethnic' sitter. Repressive portraits therefore represent power exercised over the indigenous sitters' bodies (Godby 2008:129).

Figure 55: Boglarka Balogh, *I morphed myself into tribal women to raise awareness of their secluded cultures*, 2016.
(Broderick 2016).

[9] Blackface performance is a political mimetology, because it parodies stereotypes of 'black' people. The stereotype derives from minstrel theatrical shows in America during the 19th century (Blackface 2016[sp]), and is currently viewed in a racist light. Blackface originally included the stereotypes of Aunt Jemima, Uncle Tom, Buck and Pickanniny amongst others (Blackface 2016[sp]). Blackface was performed by 'white' or 'black' minstrels who imitated 'black' music, dance and speech. By the Second World War, the practice was dated. Blackface was a popular practice amongst 'black' musicians who were often not willing to relinquish the practice. According to Lott (1995:6) minstrelsy "[...] brought to public form racialised elements of thought and feeling, tone and impulse, residing at the very edge of semantic availability, which Americans only dimly realised they felt, let alone understood. The minstrel show was less the incarnation of an age-old racism than an emergent social semantic figure highly responsive to the demands and troubled fantasies of its audiences". A full discussion of the complexities of the blackface practice is not possible, due to the limitations of space and the specific focus of this study.

Chapter Three argued that anthropological portraits do not capture the 'authentic' presence of the Other, but are rather portraits of the Self. This is also true of the blackface (self)portraits by Hungarian journalist Boglarka Balogh. Balogh digitally transforms her own portrait into the likeness of seven different types of African tribal women. She posted the series of (self)portraits on BoredPanda (2016), but deleted her original post after receiving overwhelming criticism for performing blackface instead of portraying the African women.[10] Balogh's intention was to raise awareness of the women's exotic tribes and to prevent them from becoming extinct (Crous 2016). She represents these women not firsthand, instead, she mediates them through a portrait of herself. She casts them in her own image by digitally superimposing their features onto her own. Her unaltered self(ie), presented in the top left-hand corner of Figure 56, forms part of the series. Its presence invites comparison with the 'portraits' of the tribal women, and facilitates the search for (racial) difference. Balogh arguably presents herself as a neutral category by appearing 'natural' in comparison to the exoticised women. Unlike them, she presents herself without any make-up, jewellery and accessories available in Western culture. She seems to normalise whiteness vis-à-vis the exotic racialised Other. Balogh's selfies reiterate what Richard Dyer (1997:3) refers to as the historical function of normative whiteness, which exerts its power by representing what it means to be human. Whiteness is thus perceived as the face of humanity. Comments on her blog (Balogh 2016) argue that although her intentions might have been morally defendable, these 'portraits' testify to her ignorance and even bear traces of racism. Balogh's 'selfies' are viewed as a masquerade, a black face to whimsically put on and take of.[11] The women are not portrayed as individuals, but as part of their respective ethnic groups. Ethnic and racial classification is arguably a repressive practice and the corner stone of the apartheid system (Breckenridge 2014:168). Balogh's intention was to raise awareness of these groups, an aim which has been accomplished albeit through controversial means.

[10] Her blog features an update that states that "[s]ince I had no intentions to offend anyone and yet I'm not able to answer to all of you, I've decided to delete my post to not hurt anyone" (Balogh 2016).

[11] This view is evident in the words of Peace Wacheta (cf Balogh 2016:[sp]; Jackson-Edwards 2016:[sp]), who asserts that: "[a]s a Turkana woman and considered that most of the African tribes you mention come from people I call friends and family, I am absolutely appalled at your nerve [...] [w]hile we are out here being killed over our dark skins, being deemed inferior because of our cultures, you think being an African woman is a costume you get to put on and take off!". What Wacheta arguably alludes to is that Balogh inadvertently participates in the facialisation of the Other instead of facilitating the self presentation of these women.

A South African example of the contentious blackface performance captured with smartphone camera technologies is evident in Figure 56. In August 2014, two (white) female students from the University of Pretoria celebrated their twenty-first birthday at a private party at the university's Madelief residence. They faced criticism for masquerading as "black domestic workers" in August 2014 during their birthday celebration.[12] It could be argued that their performance would have passed unnoticed had it not been shared on social media platforms. Digital platforms facilitate public participation in images by allowing the public to share their views on shared representations. Already, the digital portrayal exists in a methexist environment of social media participation.

Figure 56: Blackface and the politics of likeness, 2014.
(Gifford 2014).

The students' mimicry was criticised as racist. Their 'racism' was evident "when ones (sic) face is painted with such haphazard and wild abandon and the buttocks are exaggerated beyond ones [*sic*] physical constitution" (Tuks gets tough on #blackface

[12] Another blackface performance took place at Stellenbosch University in 2014 when two male students cross-dressed as tennis stars Venus and Serena Williams for a costume party. A mistaken blackface performance was that of two 'white' female students from Stellenbosch University taken at a Heemstede stellar space-themed housewarming party circulated on social media in February 2016. The students apologised for causing offence and have been suspended pending an investigation. Erroneously dubbed a blackface incident, closer investigation revealed it to be 'purple-face' instead. Internationally, an investigation followed after a teacher in Alabama wore a blackface Kanye West costume, and two 'white' men masqueraded as Aborigines in Australia in February 2016 (Kilalea 2016:[sp]).

party picture 2014). Unlike the masquerade of Cindy Sherman for example whose portraits are arguably social commentary on the disempowered status of women, Figure 56 does not seem to present any higher order social critique. Sherman's famous depictions of women in her series of 69 *Untitled Film Stills* highlight the portraits as media stereotypes. These stereotypes are in turn mimicked by 'real' women, with dire consequences. The performance represented in Figure 56 arguably increases the distance between the students' normative white or 'non-raced' (Dyer 1997:2) self and the stereotypical Other and widens the gap between different 'races'. [13] Their mimicry also however points to the hiatus inherent in the mimetic process. In this regard, Derrida (1981b:9) reminds that mimesis is only able to produce difference in the form of "two productions". Derrida (1981b:9) states:

> [t]he less it [the productive mimesis] depends on nature, the more it resembles nature. Mimesis here is not the representation of one thing by another. ... It is not the relation of two products but of two productions. And of two freedoms. The artist does not imitate things in nature [...] but the act *natura naturans*, the operation of *physis*. [...] "True" mimesis is between two producing subjects and not between two produced things.

Following the logic of Derrida's argument regarding mimesis, one could argue that the students' performances are in fact separate productions without an originary models. This view is arguably bolstered by the idea that, if the notion of 'race' is a fallacy (Van Robbroeck 2012:6), how do we know that they are imitating 'black' 'women'?[14] How do we know that they are imitating "domestic worker outfits" ('Blackface' students expelled from residence 2014:[sp]) in particular if there is no essence to compare them with? It is arguably only when one is able to see 'race' and essence that one view that mimetology has the power to create 'difference' on a value scale of superiority/inferiority. The argument against 'blackface' therefore arguably uses the notion of race as a 'fixed' category.

The notion of 'epidermalisation' is nevertheless evident in the 'blackface' portrayal. Frantz Omar Fanon (1925-) (2008:xiii) asserts that the colonial value

[13] The University of Pretoria initiated disciplinary procedures against the students for their racist behaviour. The students have apologised for their blackface portrayal after the involvement of the South African Human Rights Commission. The University of Pretoria has accepted their apology and they were subsequently allowed in 2015 to return to their residence (Gifford 2014).

[14] In this regard, Van Robbroeck (2012:6) asserts that "[a]lthough race, that most fateful and unfortunate modern inventions, is a discursive construction, it is experienced, first and foremost, as a physical reality inscribed on the intimate surface of the body".

system entails whiteness to be symbolic of notions of 'Justice, Truth, and Virginity'. These terms define what it means to be civilised. Blackness denotes the polar opposite and signifies "ugliness, sin, darkness, [and] immorality" (Fanon 2008:xiii) . According to this view, the portrayal evident in Figure 56 arguably defaces 'black' people by becoming a mimesis of what Fanon (2008:xiii) refers to as the *epidermalisation* (or internalisation), of the 'inferiority' of the colonial subject. The blackface performance (Figure 56) subsequently inverts the title of Frantz Fanon's book *Black skins, white masks* and becomes *White faces, black masks*. Fanon (2008:x) "investigate[s] the psychology of colonialism" which entails the internalisation of 'inferiority' and the final mimicry of the coloniser in to regain a sense of self.

A self-proclaimed effort to deface colonialism, the Rhodes Must Fall (#RhodesMustFall) protest commenced on 9 March 2015 when Chumani Maxwele threw faeces at the statue of British imperialist, Cecil John Rhodes (Fairbanks 2015:[sp]). This move signalled the 'official' launch of the call to remove the statue of Rhodes from its location at the University of Cape Town. Following the protests, the statue was removed exactly a month later on 9 April 2015 (Figure 57). The rejection of Rhodes' likeness is linked with the call for decolonisation, especially in this instance, the "decolonisation of education" in South Africa (Subramany 2015:[sp]).

Figure 57: David Harrison, [Author's description].
(Changing the face of history: the removal of Rhodes' presence), 2016.
(Hess 2015:[sp]).

As discussed in Chapter Three, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), which is a South African socialist political party, have admitted to the vandalisation of the statue of Paul Kruger in April 2015 (Ngcobo 2015:[sp]). This act highlights the political nature of both likeness and its blemishing.[15] Mimetic likeness was vital for the construction of nationalist presence, and its defacement is evident in the fragmentation of this presence, through the process of decolonisation (Rhodes must fall: the movement after the statue 2015:[sp]).[16]

Figure 58: Ra'eesa Pather, [Author's description].
(The politics of likeness and colonisation), 2015.
(Rhodes must fall: The movement after the statue 2015:[sp]).

The Rhodes Must Fall movement was the catalyst for the Fees Must Fall movement that commenced on 14 October 2015 at the University of the Witwatersrand, in

[15] The political party – the Economic Freedom Fighters – was launched by Julius Malema in July 2013 after Malema broke away from the African National Congress Youth League. Malema has already been convicted for hate speech in 2010 and 2011 after singing apartheid struggle song *Dubula iBunu* or *Shoot the Boer*. The judge ruled that his repeated singing of the song is "derogatory, dehumanising and hurtful" (Laing 2011:[sp]). The EFF is known for their pro-forced land redistribution policy (Lain 2011). EFF leader Julius Malema (1981-) has instructed his followers to eliminate the statues that are symbolic of colonialism, adding that how they go about this is "none of my business" (Hess 2015:[sp]).

[16] This link between the fragmentation of likeness and decolonisation is reiterated by Rhodes Must Fall campaigner, Kealeboga Ramuru (Rhodes Must Fall: The movement after the statue 2015). Ramuru states that "[w]hen we say 'Rhodes Must Fall' we mean that patriarchy must fall, that 'white' supremacy must fall, that all systematic oppression based on any power relations of difference must be destroyed at all costs".

response to a proposed university fee increase of 10.5 % The Fees Must Fall campaign started six months after the Rhodes Must Fall movement was launched. These two movements sparked renewed tensions, followed by clashes at the University of Pretoria during the Afrikaans Must Fall movement, which was a protest against the use of Afrikaans as institutional language of instruction at the university.[17]

6.4 Face-to-face: Methexis as an ontological event

It could be argued that the exhibitionist nature of the selfie discussed in the previous section becomes advantageous (instead of merely narcissistic) when posted on social media. Social media sharing invites public participation and transfers power onto the public who become producers of ideas instead of mere consumers. Sharing therefore has the power to elicit social change via participation. Selfies belonging to the ColourBlind campaign (Figure 59), initiated by some University of Pretoria students, contain traces of moving towards methexist participation. Regardless of its success or failure, criticism of the campaign forms part of the participation that allows for democratic interaction regarding issues of likeness, 'race' and privilege.[18] The campaign encourages students from different racial groups to pose for a selfie and to post it on the social media site Facebook, under #ColourBlind. The aim of these selfies are arguably to display a methexist character with the aim of fusing the horizons between the traditional situatedness (Gadamer 2006:283) of different groups in the face of racial tension. Gadamer proposes the 'fusion of horizons' through the

[17] The Afrikaans Must Fall movement includes the EFF, UP Rising and the university's South African Student Congress (Sasco). Scuffles between students belonging to different political groups broke out over the University of Pretoria's institutional language policy in February 2016. According to reports, organisations such as such as the EFF Student Command (EFFSC), the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA) and AfriForum Youth were involved in a face-off over the use of Afrikaans as mode of instruction. Some students argued that if Afrikaans is maintained as an institutional language, other languages should be recognised as well (Kubheka & Corke 2016).

[18] The #ColourBlind movement has received criticism for being an artificial remedy for the long history of racism and marginalisation. This sentiment is echoed in the post by @ZamaFakudze: "[s]o just because you're #ColourBlind racial injustices and inequalities don't exist?" Another comment is that "[b]eing #ColourBind is a cop out. It's ignoring a massive part of somebody's identity. I would rather embrace colour than to be blind to it" (#ColourBlind campaign has some seeing red 2016). Detractors state that the campaign is blind to the inequalities faced by previously disadvantaged students and that this campaign, in a way, perpetuate colonial injustices by refusing to face up to the "visceral effects of racial inequalities" (Pilane 2016:[sp]). Pilane asserts that "[r]acism will not end through gleeful selfies [...]". In response to Pilane's consistent use of the term 'black people', a commenter (divvie) (Pilane 2016:[sp]) states that the writer's identification with a 'black' group itself "seems to smack of racism".

process of understanding, an act inherent within methexis. According to Gadamer (2006:304), the transposal of oneself through understanding involves:

> neither [...] the empathy of one individual for another nor [..] subordinating another person to our own standards; rather, it always involves rising to a higher universality that overcomes not only our own particularity but also that of the other.[19]

Figure 59: Sinead, Best friends for more than 10 years now! My family, my blood, my other half #colourblind, 2016. (We are #ColourBlind 2016:[sp]).

The selfies represented in Figure 59 attempt to "fuse [racial] horizons" and its methexism consist of the technical accessibility that facilitates participation in the selfie genre. The selfies belonging to the #ColourBlind campaign are the self-presentation (*Darstellung*) of a non-racial presence. They arguably aim to present not an essential being (*ousia*), but a fused horizon. Instead of imitation ('being like'), they aim to produce methexist *being with* (Gadamer 2006:410). Regarding the notion of

[19] The notion of universality is arguably dated, due to its location in historical hegemonic practices. It could however be argued that the power play traditionally entailed by the idea of universality is absent, because Gadamer (2006:304) urges participants to overcome "their own particularity". What arises from this process is not the dichotomous 'us' and 'them', but a shared perspective through the fusing of horizons.

being with', Gadamer (2006:135) asserts that: "[i]t is no longer a one-sided relationship". This 'being-together' with understanding has to potential to bridge gaps partly created by mimetic colonial portrayal.

6.5 Facing the self(ie): The will-will-to-methexist-presence

The previous section on selfies discussed the 'classical' understanding of the selfie as a narcissistic extension of the traditional self-portrait. As discussed earlier, this narcissistic selfish presence is evident in Kardashian West's selfies. As an (inter)face to the world and projecting one's desired presence, the selfie becomes a vital aspect of self-branding.[20] The final section of this chapter discusses selected methexist selfies by Tony Gum (Figures 60 & 61) and Karabo Poppy Moletsane (Figure 62). The selfies selected for discussion exemplify the technocratic accessibility of the smartphone medium responsible for producing the selfie. It also owes its participatory nature to social media platforms on which these portraits are shared, viewed or consumed. The smartphone bestows onto its owner the authority and agency to define his or her own presence. Smartphone owners are able to capture, edit, enhance and delete images to their hearts' desire. Their images are captured without the mediation of the traditional portraitist. This increased agency was previously witnessed when mirror technologies resulted in an increased self-awareness, evident in Dürer's *Self-portrait at 26* (1498) (Figure 16), as well as his *Self-portrait with fur-trimmed robe* (1500) (Figure 17).

This chapter argues that the selected selfies are characterised by a will-to-methexist-presence. This is evident in different ways in the selfies by Gum and Moletsane. Gum's selfies exemplify an aesthetic participation, not only in her own image, but in art historical portraits through the artistic device of appropriation. Moletsane's 'everyday' selfie is arguably representative of the average South African who documents an everyday digital presence. The selfie selected represents Moletsane's participation in her own self(ie), which becomes a political participation in the light of the repressive portraits discussed earlier in this chapter.

Described as the 'Queen of Selfies' (Huisman 2016:[sp]), Zipho Gum, also referred to as Tony Gum, is a student at the Cape Peninsula University of

[20] I adapted the phrase '(inter)face to the world' from *A face to the world: On self-portraits*, which is the title of a book on self-portraits by Cummings (2010). I use the term (inter)face in relation to selfies.

Technology.[21] As argued earlier, Gum's selfies represent a methexist technocratic participation, a participation in her self(ie), as well as the aesthetic participation of appropriation.

Figure 60: Tony Gum, *Spilt milk*, 2016.
C - type print on fuji crystal archival print, Dibond mounted, 150 cm x 100 cm.
Private Collection.
(Kowrie 2016:[sp]).

A reference to Tretchikoff's *The Green Lady*, Gum's selfie (or rather, a self-portrait mediated by the smartphone held by the subject) *Spilt milk* (2016) (Figure 60) forms part of the *Milked in Africa* series of selfies. This selfie is described as portraying "Africa's strength" despite the current challenges it faces (Isama 2016:[sp]). However, it could be argued that the appropriation of Tretchikoff's portrait *The Green Lady*

[21] *Vogue Magazine* referred to Gum as "the coolest kid in Cape Town" and she was listed as one of the top 10 artists by *Artsy Magazine* (Nagel 2016:[sp]).

(1952-1953) (Figure 34) is the main exegesis of this selfie. The meaning of the allusion is not immediately apparent and it seems that Gum chose to appropriate this portrait simply due to its existing associations with notions of camp and fashionable chic (Lamprecht 2011:123). As discussed in Chapter Four, *The Green Lady*, to Tretchikoff, exemplifies the 'essence of Chinese womanhood' (Jamal 2011:61). Gum could be referring to the 'essence' of 'African womanhood' through alluding to *The Green Lady*. This allusion could be a dangerous move, since constructing, capturing and maintaining a fixed essential presence lead to the apartheid politics of likeness. In an almost anachronistic move, Gum highlights the notion of skin tone, which is a controversial aspect of past and contemporary discourses of race. The appropriated skin tone however is an "alien-like bluish green" (Lamprecht 2011:143). Gum could either be seen as exoticising and essentialising her self(ie) through appearing in Tretchikoff's greenface or she could be merely presenting her presence as skin-deep chic. Gum's selfie-portrayal that appropriates a pre-existing artwork nevertheless exemplifies methexist participation in choosing her self(ie) image. It is evident that mimesis is employed within the participatory appropriation, but in a playful manner, exemplifying the freedom of production that Derrida identified as characteristic of mimesis.

Figure 61: Tony Gum, *Free Da Gum I*, 2016.
C - type fuji crystal archival print, Dibond mounted, 150 cm x 100 cm.
Christopher Moller Gallery.
(Tony Gum: Free Da Gum 2016:[sp]).

Gum's portrayal of herself (Figure 61) appropriates the famous presence of Frida Kahlo de Rivera in her self-portraits. Gum's mimicry of Kahlo's monobrow, and its assimilation into her own facial features transposes aspects of Kahlo's presence onto her own. Gum arguably presents her self(ie) through the mediation of the Kahlo's image. Kahlo's self-portraits presents the emotional pain of being human (Tansey & Kleiner 1996:1077). Gum's allusion to Kahlo seems to transfer this existential pain onto her own self(ie) presence. She transcends the notion of personal individual identification to that of a national one by including South Africa's national flower, the Protea (*Protea cynaroides*), in her headgear. In doing so, she perhaps refers to the psyche of the nation. However, any authentic autobiographical presence is challenged by her nonchalant pose and her near apathetic facial expression. Her disinterested demeanour alludes to the idea that her references to Kahlo might be 'empty'. This view is reinforced by the following quotation: "[i]n one fell swoop Gum shifted Kahlo from tragic icon into irresistible comic actress" (Tony Gum: Free Da Gum III 2016[sp]). The mimicry of Kahlo's facial features, as well as the allusion to Tretchikoff's *Green Lady* exemplifies Gum's freedom to wear various faces.[22] This freedom is denied to the blackface students, arguably because of the historical colonial context in which blackface originated. It nevertheless highlights the fact that mimetology is still a controlled process in post-apartheid South Africa. Gum's playfulness and agency is highlighted by the following quote (Tony Gum: Free Da Gum III 2016:[sp]).

> She is not blind to the fact that black lives matter, but neither is she prepared to return to the pathological optic which fuels a historical grievance founded on racial and sexual inequality. Rather, her selfies are characterised by the life-affirming ease of being in the world.

This artistic freedom of self-definition exemplified by Gum's selfies is arguably paralleled in the everyday self(ie) presence of Karabo Poppy Moletsane, a Pretoria based designer. Moletsane shares her selfies on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

[22] The notion of playfulness is evident In Gum's *Black Coca* series of which the selfie *Black Coca Cola, African Woman* (2016), is an example, Gum arguably references Andy Warhol's Pop Art works such as *Green Coca-Cola Bottles* (1962). Her reference to Pop Art further enhances the idea of play in her selfies.

Figure 62: Karabo Poppy Moletsane, Unimpressed with the current state of my bare arm, 2016.
Photograph.
(Karabo Poppy Moletsane 2016).

Moletsane's (Karabo Poppy Moletsane 2016) selfie (Figure 62) posted on Instagram, bears the caption: "[u]nimpressed with the current state of my bare arm, it's in serious need of a plethora of tattoos". This mundane selfie exemplifies the subject's freedom to alter her body as she desires. It exemplifies the formation of her personal 'everyday' decisions regarding her own bodily presence and likeness. The selfie in Figure 62 emphasises the subject's dissatisfaction with a body part, which she describes as 'bare' or 'natural'. This selfie highlights the subject as curator not only of her selfie, but author of her bodily image. As a graphic designer, she will arguably assume the role of creative director/curator overseeing the artistic process of tattooing her arm. As highlighted by West (2004:37) "[p]ortraiture is thus about both body and soul. It represents the 'front' of a person [...] in such a way as to convey their distinct identity as well as to link him or her to a particular milieu". Moletsane's 'façade' is that of an

urban designer, positioned in a post-apartheid social milieu. Her historical situatedness facilitates her participation in her body, identity and her selfie.

6.6 Conclusion

It is argued that the selfies discussed in this chapter embody the process of productive methexis. Mimesis, as was argued in Chapter Five, is the spindle on which notions of self, sign and world revolves (Schweiker 1990:189). This chapter argued that the transformation of mimesis into methexis changes the pivot to democratic participation, away from mimetic prescriptive models that commands emulation. Because methexis is productive, the self becomes productive instead of reflective. The sitter participates in the self(ie), and this creates an ontological event. The selfie, or the 'aesthetic mode of being' that Gadamer (2006:131) refers to enjoys the same ontological valence as the self. Gadamer states that "the presentation is an ontological event and occupies the same ontological level as what is represented. By being presented it experiences as it were, an increase in being" (Gadamer 2006:135). The reason for this is that "[t]he world that appears in the play of presentation does not stand like a copy next to the real world, but is that world in the heightened truth of being" (Gadamer 2006:132). The selfie, like Gadamer's notion of presentation, "affirm[s] its own being" and is therefore able to present that which exists. Therefore, it is though the selfie editing app Perfect 365 that Kardashian West is able to present her selfish presence. Through technological aestheticisation, Warhol is able to present his manufactured self to the viewer. Social media platforms enable the presentation of viewpoints regarding blackface phenomena and colonial likeness. The very nature of the medium (as instantaneous, democratic, and public) cannot be untangled from the formation of selfies and viewpoints regarding selfies. Gum's 'selfies' materialise through the mediation of existing self-portraits, and Moletsane's considers the alteration of her body in the form of a selfie. The selfie becomes the presentation (*Darstellung*) of her abstract thoughts (Figure 62). The selfie therefore becomes the advent of the self through participation. The portrait is no longer seen as *adequatio* (imitation), through *tēchne*, (which implies imitation) and it does not refer to a *alētheia* (*ἀλήθεια*) or the subject's essential truth. The selfies discussed in the current chapter do not follow the linear and metaphysical archē to telos trajectory, because the play inherent in the process of methexis disrupts this linearity. Instead, democratic interactivity with the

colonial portrayals of the past is witnessed in the various 'MustFall' campaigns, aiming to attain agency over future selves.

Chapter Six commenced by discussing the selfie's democratic origin when an inebriated Australian man fell on a step and took a 'selfie' of his injured face. The selfie was thus born under unpretentious circumstances, displaying the 'bad' aesthetics of an artistically untrained individual. The selfie is currently widely adopted as a popular art form, and the previously passive subject becomes author, producer and curator of his or her digital presence. The authorial position assumed by the sitter is facilitated by accessible smartphone technologies. These include the reverse camera option located on the smartphone and the numerous selfie editing apps that can be acquired to realise one's desired image. The monopod (selfie stick) that is connected to the camera, or the Bluetooth remote control that communicates with the smartphone camera facilitate the capturing of one's image. The entire process is enabled by software such as Android Operating Systems that runs the smartphone. The process of taking one's selfie is therefore already methexist in nature, since the power of self-representation shifts to the portrayed. This power becomes evident when viewing the selfies by the "official Queen of selfies" (Harrison 2015:[sp]; White 2014:[sp]), Kim Kardashian West. Her selfies (Figures 53 & 54), although being participatory in nature, exemplify a closed system of signification due to its self-referentiality. The self-reflexivity of her representation is characterised by rhetorical devices such as the infamous pout she repeats throughout her self-portraits. The pout could arguably be seen as an empty sign. Unlike the grimace that expresses an interior emotion such as pain or disgust, the pout reflects representation itself. The pout therefore signifies that the subject's presence is being captured by the smartphone. The discussion regarding the selfie as participatory methexis took a detour through the discussion of the digital repressive selfie.

The digital blackface mimicry by Hungarian journalist Boglarka Balogh (2016) (Figure 55) sparked hefty criticism, which resulted in her deleting her post from the social media site BoredPanda. She was criticised for performing blackface, which is a racist practice. She mediates the portraits of African women through he own. This is arguably the visual equivalent of speaking for the Other. Her mimicry facialises the represented as Other, a practice which is consistent with colonial portraits discussed in Chapter Three. Examples of repressive South African social media representations include that of the two university students who became *mimos*

(*μῖμος*) of a colonial stereotype (Figure 56). Concurrent with these portrayals, the defacement of colonial presence took place. The statues of Cecil Rhodes, Paul Kruger, and Queen Victoria amongst others were vandalised in South Africa during 2015. The defacement of colonial presence is reflected in the desire towards decolonisation. Mimesis constructed the facialisation of the subject's presence in the portrait, and methexis participation in the examples provided in this chapter defaces this presence. Due to its circular nature, it also allows for the possibility of re-facement. The discussion of methexist participation concludes with the discussion of selected selfies of Tony Gum and Karabo Poppy Moletsane. Tony Gum's 'selfie' *Spilt milk* (2016) (Figure 60) and her appropriation of Kahlo's self-portrait (Figure 61) exemplify methexist participation. This process includes technical, aesthetic and political participation. Technical participation is created due to the use of the interactive medium. Aesthetic participation consists of the appropriation of portraits and self-portraits, such as Tretchikoff's *Green Lady* and Frida Kahlo's facial features as evident in her self-portraits. Political participation includes the freedom to authorise a personal identity. Karabo Moletsane's selfie of her un-tattooed arm (Figure 62) exemplifies a playful presentation of her 'everyday' self. Her dissatisfaction conveyed through the selfie foregrounds her role as creative director, presiding over the aestheticisation of her own body. The selfie affirms her individual presence as a chic urban designer. The selfies discussed here by both Gum and Moletsane are in in stark contrast to the colonial body referred to by Van Robbroeck (2012:5&6), which is the "site of South Africa's traumatic history", and the location of bio-political colonial power. Both Gum and Moletsane's selfies arguably portray their power to encode their own representations, marking their individual and autonomous presence as participating in a democratic South Africa. The renewed agency and the omnipresence of the self(ie) seems to swing Vasari's (1550) historical pendulum towards the metaphysics of presence yet again.[23]

[23] Related to the selfies of Gum, the metaphysics of likeness threatens to spill over into the politics of likeness, especially evident when she asserts that: "As I read about black consciousness, about being proud of being black, I was like: Whoa, that's amazing, that's what I want to do with my work" (Gum cf Huisman 2016).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary of chapters

This study commenced by acknowledging the vast amount of interpretations regarding the nature of portraiture. I soon realised that it would be futile to narrowly investigate the numerous stylistic manifestations of the portrait, since that would amount to an art historical study noting the formal changes that the genre underwent. Numerous studies on the history of portraiture have already been conducted. These include Richardt Brilliant's *Portraiture* (1991), Joanna Woodall's *Portraiture: Facing the subject* (1997), Shearer West's *Portraiture* (2004), and Cynthia Freeland's *Portraits in painting and photography* (2007). In terms of this study's aims, the ontological nature of a linear historical investigation from *archē* to *telos* would in itself be metaphysical and would therefore be contrary to the participatory aims of this study. It is for this reason that I have started this investigation with the etymology of the word 'portrait', which derives from the French *portraire* (portray) or represent. The notion of representation is thus built into the notion of the portrait. In order to be what it is, it will always be a depiction, portrayal or representation *of* someone. This realisation prompted Richardt Brilliant (2013:23) to assert that "[t]here is great difficulty in thinking about pictures, even portraits by great artists, as art and not thinking about them primarily as something else, the person presented". In viewing great portraits, one tends to conflate the sitter's presence with that of the materiality of the portrait in thinking that the portrait *is* the person. This representational characteristic of portraiture guided me towards mimesis, which defines the portrait's ontological nature. Because of mimesis, it is virtually impossible to tear asunder the person outside of the frame from his or her portrait-image. From the basic definition of the portrait as mimetic representation, the discussion organically moved towards the investigation of the perception that the sitter outside the frame, is present inside the portrait. Chapter Two discussed the notion of the sitter's presence in the portrait, which becomes almost magical when thinking that through mimesis, the portrait effaces itself and creates the illusion that it contains its referent (Barthes 1982:5). Through sheer trickery, the presence of the sitter appears to be captured in the portrait and it is as if his or her full presence materialises even though the person is absent. It

was argued in Chapter Two that the Western eye has been trained to perceive this virtually supernatural phantasm in an object such as the portrait. To this end, a canon that sanctified divine presence in the icon was issued in 626 the Council of Quinsextum. The council was also referred to as the Trullan Synod. This synod ratified the movement away from symbolism and representation towards *being*. The icon was no longer regarded as separate from its referent (Honour & Fleming 1991:282). Presence became image in the icon and the referent was perceived as inherently embodied in its portrayal. In this regard, the Trullan Synod exclaimed that: "[t]he human figure of Christ our God, the Lamb, who took on the sins of the world be set up even in the images of the ancient lamb" (Honour & Fleming 1991:282; Tucker 2011:[sp]). The iconic embodiment of Christ corresponded to a strategic move towards mimetic naturalism (Honour & Fleming 1991:282). Fayum portraits of the first and second century AD literally ensured the sitter's presence in the afterlife, and served as a body to inhabit after death (West 2004:63). As noted by West (2004:63), the sitter desires to remain present through the portrait. The portrait re-embodies the presence of the sitter in his or her bodily absence. The portraits of the Renaissance, characterised by the metaphysics of presence, arguably became an extension of the conflation between portrayal and presence, evident in the holy icon.

The metaphysics of presence in the portrait captures the sitter's desire to be present for evermore. The presence provided by the portrait abates the encroaching presence of the sitter's absence in death, albeit temporarily. From this firmly established mimetic foundation, the genre of portraiture developed to capture the presence of the humanist individual who became the sole author of his identity (an example here is the portraits by Dürer) (Freeland 2007:97). The humanist presence of the individual was arguably usurped and developed in the notion of the Cartesian rational subject, who is capable of designing his own destiny. In this regard, West (2004:29) states that "[t]he notion of the individual is the legacy of the seventeenth century, when the idea of 'the self' began to be explored philosophically" (West 2004:29). The presence of this individual is increasingly felt in the portraits of the time. Although renowned for his civic portraiture, Frans Hals' portrait of Malle Babbe exemplifies the notion of emotion as related to individual character. In this portrait, the hidden mental states of the sitter are conflated with her physiognomic characteristics in order to reveal her as a somewhat unhinged presence. The inner self is expressed through the physiognomic likeness. It was argued that the desire for

metaphysical presence culminated in the Victorian death portrait. The mimetic ontological nature of these portraits entailed that all signs of death ought to be hidden from view and hence, from existence. To this effect, the deceased sitter should appear as if alive. Stands and devices that prop up the dead into pose that imitate life were prevalent. Facial features were digitally enhanced in order to maintain the illusion of presence. The metaphysics of presence entailed the mimetology of the living by the dead. Chapter Three argued that the metaphysics of presence, or the purposive desire to become and remain present after death was extended into the politics of likeness. The aim was to make a nationalistic presence felt during colonialism.

The politics of likeness was discussed in Chapter Three. It was argued that a vast amount of scholarly writing was produced that conflated the discourse of 'race' with the genre of portraiture. Chapter Three argued that during the eighteenth century, the apparatuses of likeness became focussed in practices related to physiognomy and anthropology. As noted by West (2004:32), physiognomy as indicator of human character was prevalent during the Renaissance already. Ancient ideas were revived, including Aristotle's *Treatise on physiognomy* (circa 300 BC). Johann Caspar Lavater (1741-1801) is regarded as the modern founder of physiognomy as a systematic discourse, and argued that facial features were indicative of character. Sir Francis Galton (1822-1911), developed an inventory of "really representative faces" (Galton 2004:6) and used photography to create composite portraits. Galton develop the idea that one can gauge character by means of bodily likeness. He also believed that human 'essence' is hereditary (1994:10-11). Galton 'contributed' to physiognomy by adding a eugenic dimension to the notion of human 'essence'. Galton played a pivotal role in the development of social Darwinism. In so doing, he created a hierarchy of 'superior' to 'inferior' 'races'. For example, in his article "Negroes and the slave trade" (1857), Galton writes (1857:1): "Sir, I do not join the belief that the African is our equal in brain or in heart [...]". These views arguably became embedded into society as 'natural' and dictated how people are perceived. Galton's legacy leaves behind the notion that individual and racial essence exists, that a taxonomy of type can be constructed and illustrated by means of portraiture. Likeness is subsequently indicative of inner presence. At the same time, Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau's (1816-1882) scientific racist theories as published in his *Essay on the inequality of the human races* (1853) postulated the 'superiority' of the Aryan 'race'. These theories amongst many others, arguably established the discourse on race which also became

influential in the construction of a political presence in South Africa. The Great Trek from the Cape Colony that commenced in 1836, for example sought the legitimisation of Afrikaner presence independent from British jurisdiction.

A personification of this presence is arguably found in the political figure of Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger (1825-1904). The yearning for a separate presence or political sovereignty is embodied in the portrait of Paul Kruger (Figure 21). This desire arguably culminated in the logic that underpinned apartheid (1948-1994). As discussed in Chapter Three, the view that 'essence' is located in likeness, the belief in a racial value scale, and the hereditary notion of human character arguably influenced the portraiture, especially that of 'non-Europeans'. Chapter Three put forth that the nation was regarded as a person. Hegel believed that the sitter's "lasting spiritual qualities should be captured in the portrait" (Schneider 2002:15). According to Hegel (Nisbet 2009:277), the nation-state consists of the spirit of the people (*volk*) and should subsequently enjoy absolute power and autonomy. The power and agency assigned to the state was evident in the Nationalist Party government during apartheid. 'Race' was the raison d'être of the apartheid state and racial taxonomy was reflected in geographical zoning. The Population Registration Act of 1950 that defined the four main South African 'races' is arguably an (inverse) mirror image of the State.

Chapter Four discussed selected anti-mimetic portraits that use 'typing' as a device to undermine the racial taxonomy of the discourse of race. As mentioned already, the depiction of people as a collective category was the corner stone of the apartheid system (Van Alphen 1999:277). For this reason, mimetic likeness was repudiated in selected portraits produced after 1994. Anti-mimetic strategies discussed in Chapter Four rejected the practice of iconic taxonomy. Marlene Dumas' series of portraits in *Black Drawings,* 1991-1992, resist the iconic arrest of the depicted (Van Alphen 1999:277 cf Barnard 2016:52). Roger Ballen's portrait of *Sergeant F de Bruin, Department of Prisons employee, Orange Free State* (1992) although arguably a mimetic portrait itself, shatters the desired reflection of the state as superior, in the frail frame of Sergeant de Bruin. Ballen thus refuses to accept the 'superior' presence of the state and produces its antithesis. As proposed in Chapter Four, another artistic device to undermine the presence of state declared racial taxonomy is masking. Masking sabotages the ontological nature of the portrait by disguising instead of revealing the 'immediate' presence of the sitter. The portraits by Kendell Geers, such as *Self-portrait* (1995), which is essentially a beer bottle, presents

to the viewer a simultaneous (mis)identification with himself. Although anti-mimetic, *Self-portrait* identifies Geers as a Dutch import, and a potentially dangerous entity. Geers' initial appropriation, *Self-portrait*, is re-appropriated in the 'portrait' *Mined* (2010). *Mined* consists of 18 carat gold. It has associations with early colonial presence in South Africa. As such, it arguably refers to uneven distribution of wealth. The notion of colonial presence is reinforced by *Portrait of a young man* (1993), as well as *Out of Africa* (1994). Whereas the former disguises Geers' facial features through masking, the latter only contains the limp mask on a gallery stand. It depicts the absence of the subject. Geers' portraits therefore traces the presence of the subject from colonisation (a product of Holland; a Dutch import) to immigration (*Out of Africa*). Strydom's *Portret van 'n jong man* #4 (2012), part of the *White Mask* series presents a mask of scars in the place of his own facial features. The Afrikaans title alludes to the notion that the subject is an Afrikaner. It could be argued that he is both a victim and a perpetrator of apartheid. These portraits therefore contain traces of the sitter's presence in the portrait, instead of an essential presence. Although anti-mimetic, traces of the subject's identification and 'resemblance' are evident in the portraits. Unable to negate presence completely, the portraits discussed in Chapter Four exemplify Derrida's dictum that "nothing is ever purely present or absent" (Bradley 2008:76). The complete negation of the metaphysics of presence would prove to be a metaphysical act in itself.

Chapter Five investigated the possibility of referring to the idea that the subject can yet again be regarded as 'present' through the mediation of the portrait. Through investigating the theories of Gadamer, it was established that traces of the sitter's presence came to presentation in the portrait. The notion of presentation ineluctably involves the process of mimesis. The portrait brings to life aspects of the sitter, instead of imitating a perceived truth (*alētheia*) that pre-exists the mimetic representation (*adequatio*). Gadamer argues that methexist participation (*Teilhabe*), instead of linear imitation, is located in Plato's theory of the Forms. Gadamer postulates that the Platonic particular is not a mere imitation of the Platonic Ideas. It participates in the Form and the Form reciprocally participates in the particular. The copy and the original therefore possess the same ontological valence. Gadamer therefore undermines and (even deconstructs!) the classical imitation theory by postulating *participation* instead. No longer does the copy (such as the portrait), imitate the original. Rather, the portrait ought to be regarded as the materialisation of

participation, or a presentation of the sitter's presence. The relationship of participation as opposed to imitation makes sense, because how else is what is imitated, recognised? Put another way, it would be impossible to recognise the 'original' in the copy, because there is no unmediated access to the 'original'. Only the *relationship of participation* allows for this recognition to take place. In this regard, Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy (1980:302) state that: "German tradition adds something to the classical, Greek theory of mythic imitation, of *mimesis* – or develops, very insistently, something that, in Plato for example, was really only nascent, that is, a theory of fusion or mystical participation ... [methexis]".

Chapter Six discussed the methexist reciprocal participation of the self and the selfie. A contextualisation of the selfie as a popular and democratic form of portraying one's self was provided. Chapter Six argued that the democratic nature of the selfie is partly due to its accessibility; for the first time in history the everyday sitter is able to assume the role of author, editor and curator of his or her own self(ie) presence. The selfie, via accessible smartphone technology, facilitates the democratisation of self-portrayal. The ubiquitous selfie, in contrast to the self-portrait, marks the sitter's perceived omnipresence. The aura of omnipresence is created by the bombardment of the viewer by continuously created and updated selfies. The subject seems to be present everywhere and at all times. This new omnipresence established via the selfie becomes the interface with 'the world' and lends the selfie a dimension of self-branding. In this regard, the 'classical' understanding of the selfie as a narcissistic selfish presence was discussed. Kim Kardashian West's inventory of selfies reflects the myth of Narcissus. Narcissus wilted away because he excessively admired his reflection in the pool to the extent that he became disengaged with reality. Kardashian West's stilted selfie poses become depthless; the (in)famous duck-face, also known as 'the pout' become rhetorical elements. In itself, the pout does not signify anything, unlike for instance a smile which results from an inner emotion. The pout signifies that she arranges her body for the benefit of the self(ie) image. Her selfies become self-reflexive and does not refers to external meaning. Kardashian West is aware of this Jamesonian (1991:8-9) deptlessness related to her pose and asserts that "I love doing that, because it gives you cheekbones. But people get so mad" ('Doing what she does best! Kim Kardashian explains how to take the 'perfect selfie' but claims she looks disgusting without make-up' 2013:[sp]). It was argued that the self-portraits by Andy Warhol are precursors to the selfie. His mediated

instantaneous polaroid presence capture traces, not of his inner essence, but of his ephemeral performances. The plasticity of the polaroid medium reflects the depthless nature of postmodern 'representation' that Jameson (1991:8-9) refers to. Warhol himself affirms this depthlessness by asserting "[...] just look at the surface of my paintings and films, and there I am. There is nothing behind it" (Shafrazi 2007:19). The selfies by Kardashian West and the self-portraits by Warhol still exemplify the notion of participation. Participation is created by the interactive nature of the medium that shifts the passive sitter into the sphere of the active producer of his or her image. This technological participation exemplified in Kardashian West's selfies and Warhol's self-portraits gains an aesthetic participatory dimension exemplified by the selfies of South African student-artist Tony Gum. Gum alludes to Tretchikoff's *Green Lady* (1952-1953) by appropriating the green skin tone which embodies the Chinese sitter. This appropriation is arguably nothing more than a reflection of Gum's desired status as 'chic'. She acquires this status due to these existing associations with Tretchikoff's portrait as camp and popular culture (Lamprecht 2011:139). Similarly, Gum transposes Frida Kahlo's famous mono brow onto her own facial features. Gum seems to leave behind the 'deeper' interpretations associated with Kahlo's self-portraits. Kahlo's surrealism signifies her inner psychological dimension (Tansey & Kleiner 1996:1077). Gum's appropriation represents the power to construct an own self(ie) image. Gum's selfies represent authorship over her likeness and artistic presence. Existing expressions form part of the visual vocabulary from which she is able to choose. Mimetology forms part of this participation in the act of imitating selected features from previous portraits. Her selective imitation of single elements or body parts inadvertently represents the fragmentation of the portraits of others. The methexism that characterises Gum's selfies includes technological, aesthetic and political participation. This participation is denied to the two student University of Pretoria students. The consequences of their mimetology makes it clear that the mimetic act is still controlled. The selfies of Karabo Poppy Moletsane exemplifies the desire to inscribe her own presence onto her body through tattooing. Moletsane becomes the author, curator and mediator of her own bodily presence. Her presence situates her as a creative designer and an individual in a post-apartheid milieu. The notion of the selfie as presenting the presence of the individual, the emphasis on authorship and agency through the artistic choices that Gum and Moletsane make, is reminiscent of the agency characterised by the humanist Renaissance individual. It

could therefore be argued that the freedom inscribed into the post-apartheid constitution allows for the reintroduction of the metaphysics of the subject's presence.

7.2 Contribution of the study

As reflected in the title, this study investigated the possibility of revisiting the ontological nature of mimesis through productive methexis in selected South African portraiture. Through investigating the methexist possibility, this study has contributed to scholarship regarding South African portraiture. As noted in Chapter One, such investigations are riddled with potential pitfalls, due to the vast scope of what is considered as falling within the ambit of portraiture. The qualifiers of the genre are culturally constructed and depends on the epoch in which the portrait is produced. A major challenge in the discussion of portraiture is that it soon became evident that the portrait is the location in which aesthetic, philosophical, political ideas, amongst others, converge. The genre is intersected by a diversity of concerns rooted in a variety of disciplines, which posed a possible problem to the delineation of the field of inquiry. As such, this study has aimed to put forward the investigation of its very nature, which was identified as mimetic, whilst simultaneously highlight extra-textual forces that contributed to the specific nature of the particular portrait under discussion. A leitmotif throughout the discussion was the notion of the sitter's presence, which the mimetic portrait desires to capture. This study has (selectively) traced the presence of the subject through major philosophical, technological and political contexts in order to lay bare the forces responsible for facilitating the subject's presence in the portrait. Tracing the subject's (metaphysical) presence through the traditional portrait, I noted that the metaphysics of presence gradually becomes usurped by the political presence, especially during the nineteenth century.

The fragmentation of this political presence could be traced to the period around 1994, when the selected South African artists disavow the identity politics that underpins the ontological mimetic nature of the portrait. 1994 Marks the formal dissolution of apartheid and this dissolution, it was argued, is reflected in the formal structure of the portrait which became anti-mimetic. The reluctance to identify with state sanctioned subject positions is mirrored in the non-representational portraits produced during this time. A contribution of this study is the observation that pure mimesis gives way to productive methexis as the spindle around which the portrait, the political milieu and the self revolves. I put forth the argument in Chapter Five that

the Derridean critique of pure presence is contained within the Gadamerian notion of play, which arises from the methexist process. Derrida's criticism of complete presence is founded on his concepts of *différance,* the supplement, play, and the trace, which underpin the logic of non-identification. Gadamer arguably shares this view, because, as highlighted by Schweiker (1999:52):

> Art is not a *tēchne* in which the product is to correspond to the idea of the artisan or an archetype and is methodologically explainable as Gadamer begins with *Spiel* [...] and therefore with performative action [...]. This seemingly simple shift has drastic consequences. The truth of art is not its imitative relation to an archetypal idea or origin [...] but the presentation of a figured meaning. [...] The event is a double mimesis, a movement and an appropriation.

Gadamer's notion of methexis as *poiesis* through the movement of mimesis reflects Derrida's critique of presence. The reason for *poiesis* is that in Derrida's view, the subject, in his mimetic attempt, only defers his presence, which leaves behind traces instead of pure presence. The mimetic dream of pure presence is precluded by the reality of *différance*, which dictates presence is endlessly deferred in the play of mimetic movement. The notion of the trace entails that the sitter's presence in the portrait is necessitated by his absence. This study contributes to the hermeneutical framework through which the portrait could be viewed, and identifies a shift in ontological nature from traditionally mimetic to methexist participation (*Teilhaben*). This shift entails that "[f]or Gadamer and for Gadamer's Plato, the appearance of an idea is just that – the appearance of an idea. The appearance and the idea are one" (Malpas & Zabala 2010:56). The ontological nature of the relationship between copy and original is that of participation. This relationship of democratic participation is identified as the ontology of the selfie. The selfie is not purely mimetic, since the spontaneous and instant nature of the selfie entails that the sitter does not imitate a model, but participates and shares traces of his or her life performative action. The ontological participatory nature of the selfie, reflects the democratic participation of a post-apartheid milieu. This study therefore contributed to South African visual culture studies by contextualising the presence of the self(ie) in the horizon of traditional mimetic portraiture.

7.3 Limitations and suggestions for further research

An aim of this study was to achieve, through understanding, the "right horizon of inquiry" (Gadamer 2006:302). This new horizon was achieved through the broadening of my initial horizon by the discussion of selected portraits. Each of these portraits are arguably positioned on the horizon of their own historical situatedness. The presence of the sitters presented in the selected portraits is that of 'others' who, "don't simply mark the limits of our understanding; they are a necessary means for understanding our [own] limits" (Vessey [sa]). The central aim of the study – to discuss the manner in which a revision of the notion of mimesis allow selected South African portraits to supersede the traditional mimetic referentiality in portraiture – has been achieved. It was established that the absorption of mimetology into a productive process of methexist participation changes the ontological status of the portrait.

However, promising related avenues regarding South African portraiture have been left unexplored. For example, the notion of the anti-portrait in relation to the resistance of likeness would be a worthy subject by itself and would add to current South African visual culture studies. An exploration of its mirror image, the traditional mimetic portrait, in relation to current calls for nationalistic anti-colonial presence and the possible implications of this practice would be a valuable contribution to current scholarship on South African portraiture. These unexplored avenues still respect the iconicity of the portrait. The investigation into the indexical presence of the subject reflected in his or her biometric 'portrait' that maps the subject's bodily presence would also provide insight into contemporary notions of presence. Such a discussion would facilitate the movement away from the iconicity of likeness towards the idea of indexical presence in data. This discussion could possibly partly address a limitation identified in the literature review of this study by providing a different hermeneutic framework based on quantitative research. However, there is a possible danger in biometric discussions regarding the subject's presence. History proved that previous anthropometric investigations resulted in eugenics practices and racial taxonomy of the politics of presence. To reiterate the statement made in Chapter One, the discussion of portraiture is fraught with possible pitfalls, of which the mimetic trap is but one of them.

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