

Work in Progress. Not to be quoted.

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Blank verbeeld,* or the incredible whiteness of being: Afrikaner nationalists photographing poverty, ca.1916-1929¹

*As ek van verbeelding praat,
Dan glo maar ek preek van 'n paradijs,
Waarheen net 'n engel te perd kan reis...*
(C.Louis Leipoldt, *Die Huisgenoot*, August 1919)²

Introduction

In October 1917, the recently launched Afrikaner nationalist monthly *Die Huisgenoot* (The Home Companion) published a winning picture by one Miss S. Buyske as part of its regular Kodak photo competition. A man and woman are seated against the backdrop of a rural landscape. Hands carefully support the two small children on their laps. Parents and their offspring look directly, solemnly, perhaps proudly at the camera. The former are certainly dressed as for a serious occasion: her pleated, white shirt and elaborate headscarf draws my eye. But light variously reflects from, is absorbed by the children's exposed bodies. The portrait's caption - 'Een Albinokafferkind' (an Albino-caffir-child) - funnels meaning into the intended focal point: the freakish whiteness of a native child. (Fig.1)

My collection of family photographs includes a fading snapshot of maternal great grandparents, probably taken in the 1930s, now carefully reproduced to imitate its sepia tones. It shows an elderly couple placed in open countryside, in

* White imag(in)ed. The verb *verbeeld* (imagine) shares the same prefix as *vertaal* – 'to translate'. 'Beeld' may be also be rendered 'image' in English (the Afrikaans *uitbeelding* is the most 'correct' term to describe rendering something into visual form). My play on words, then, draws on critiques of positivist approaches to photography by scholars, and the growing body of historical research on 19th century and 20th century visual discourses that constructed photography as transparent records of a prior reality. If trans-lating involves no simple transference of meaning from one language to (du Toit 1999), *verbeeld* likewise involves *verbeelding* (imagination), transformation and change.

¹ I would like to thank Patricia Hayes and Gary Minkley for introducing me to the pleasures and problematics of Visual History, and to many of the theoretical texts and comparative historical studies that inform my work.

² See page 30 for translation (before footnote 64 in the body of my paper). Note that while I provide copious translations from Dutch and Afrikaans, I have tried to avoid cluttering the

a traditional pose of man and wife. He sits stiffly on a straight-backed wooden chair. She, wearing a severe dark dress, stands solidly, formidably, behind. Where is Whiteness in this picture? Perhaps it is located in that part of the image I first found strange: why did my forebears choose this empty space as background for their portrait? I understood more when my mother, joking that my sister had dubbed the picture 'Laat Vrugte' (Late Fruit), reminded me that they received a small-holding as part of the Dutch Reformed Church's rehabilitation scheme for landless whites. This was their farm at Marchand in the northern Cape – my great grandparents posed, proudly, in front of cultivated land. Hardly empty, this space was indeed *blank*.*

Most of us associate photographic albums with familial traditions of remembrance – with weddings, birthdays, holidays. In the snapshot on the black page of this archived album a fashionable young woman perches upon (it seems) a garden wall. Her white dress contrasts nicely with the lush geraniums and her bare, sun-browned arms. Tousled hair frames a face turned towards the sun with narrowed eyes. Behind her, the generous Cape veranda throws foreshortened shadows.

But this is not a family album, certainly not in any usual sense. The caption identifies Seugnet Bruwer, 'onderwyser (op Willowmore) wat gehelp het met die merk van ons toetse' / teacher (on Willowmore) who helped us mark our tests'. On the same page are other pictures. Here, two suited, pleased-looking young men ('Grosskopf & EGM') pose on a farm vehicle. Below, variously, children and teacher at a 'plaasskool' (farm school) are frozen single-file with arms akimbo, and a 'St III seun' (Std three boy) stands isolated in ill-fitting clothes. In one of two adjacent, similar shots of the 'Van der Mescht' family, their youngest figures as a wriggling blur – the sloping patchwork roof and bare bricks of an old house stands behind. Opposite the page, several smartly dressed men together with one woman pose against their car: 'lede van die Kommissie...' (members of the Commission...) Indeed, the album (compiled by 'EGM', E.G. Malherbe) has an uncompromisingly specific title:

text too heavily by omitting quotation marks for translations that directly follow the original, and by providing some translations via footnotes.

* Afrikaans has two words for the English 'white': 'wit' and 'blank'/'blanke'. The latter carries historical connotations of racial purity, the sanctity of 'whiteness' and the weight of publicly legislated racism that the English 'white' (and Afrikaans 'wit') does not convey.

`Carnegie Onderzoek – 1929. Armblanke-tipes en wonings, Oostelike Kaapland’
(Carnegie Inquiry – 1929. Poor white types and dwellings, Eastern Cape).

I began this research project intent on examining how *armblankes* - those people claimed as members of the *volk* and anxiously perceived as living on the peripheries of whiteness by Afrikaner nationalists - were photographed during the early decades of nationalist mobilisation. Almost no historical research has as yet been done on this subject. Indeed, while the imbrication of various colonialisms and photo graphic projects in the context of Namibian history have been significantly investigated in *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the making of Namibian History*, South African historical studies still lag behind in exploring past uses of photography.³ Some of the work that explores the production and circulation of visual images in the southern African context is certainly relevant to studies of how ‘race’ was constructed photographically in South Africa. For example, in a contribution to the Namibian volume Hayes explores the interplay between images celebrating South African born colonial administrator Cocky Hahn’s masculine, white self and his pictures of native subjects.

Hayes and Rassool have also analysed some of the surviving ‘visual fragments’ from ‘different layers of visual representations in different media’ of the 1920s and 1930s – traces of the intersection between ‘science’ and public, visual display. Projects central to the South Africanisation of scientific research involved intense scopic attention fixated on ‘Bushwomen/men’. Racial anthropologists and associated researchers thus participated in processes of the ‘peripheralisation and rural immiseration and the naming and framing of South Africa’s regions into its central and frontier spaces’ and in ‘the assertion of a modern South African nation and its metropolitanisation within the subcontinent and the world.’⁴ But scholars have only begun to examine the visual

³ W. Hartmann et al, *The Colonising Camera: Photographs in the making of Namibian History* (Cape Town, University of Cape Town Press 1998) See the conference ‘Encounters with Photography: Photographing people in Southern Africa, 1860-1999’ (SA museum, 1999) – although relatively few historical contributions focusing on photographs from South Africa were offered on this occasion.

⁴ C.Rassool and P. Hayes: ‘Gendered Science, Gendered Spectacle:/Khanako’s South Africa, 1936-1937’ (Conference on Gender and Colonialism, University of the Western Cape, 1997), 1-2

self-representations of 'white' South African modernity within the overlap and interplay of visual discourses. It is that often bland space within which those who created and/or consumed images of native 'others' simultaneously created racialised images of themselves and those they claimed as *eie* (own) that I have chosen to explore in this paper.

Historians have identified significant and accelerating class differentiation amongst Dutch Afrikaans-speakers from the ca. the 1860s⁵. Middle-class concern about such trends was evident by the early 1880s.⁶ The words *arme blanken* entered public discussion in the Cape from at least the following decade, when Dutch Reformed churchmen - also women involved in missionary endeavours - first articulated a 'poor white problem'.⁷ After the South African war and particularly from the mid-1910s, Afrikaner nationalists - writing in Dutch-Afrikaans newspapers or cultural magazines, often speaking as members of the philanthropic, Christian Afrikaans women's organisations - articulated anxieties about escalating 'white' impoverishment with increasing urgency. A number of historians have researched the ways in which such concerns have been articulated in print or have discussed Afrikaner nationalist strategies for capturing the support of small farmers and the increasing numbers of urbanised Afrikaans-speaking workers, and for dealing with those apparently unemployable 'Afrikaners' unable or unwilling to adjust to economic pressures. However, little research has been done on the visual expression of anxieties about a growing *armblankedom*.⁸

⁵ C. Bundy 'Vagabond Hollanders and Runaway Englishmen': White Poverty in the Cape before Poor Whiteism' in Beinart, W. and Delius, P. (edss) *Putting a Plough to the Ground* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986) M. Du Toit, 'Women, Welfare and the Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism: A Social History of the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging', c.1870-1939' (Phd, UCT, 1996). I still have to add literature on the Transvaal and Free State to this list - I have so far cited work focusing on the Cape Colony.

⁶ When Dutch-Afrikaans women in Cape Town founded an orphanage for destitute white children and an *armenhuis* (poorhouse) for destitute 'Protestant' (effectively white) women (du Toit 1996) I am here drawing on my previous work which was focused on the Cape - and must still include information about the Boer Republics and Natal.

⁷ Correspondence in Dutch journals unemployment amongst 'onze armen' (our poor), the need to educate (white) rural children and the growing 'grote heidendom in ons midden... hier in het onderveld... in vele gevallen zijn zij reeds lager gezonken dan de kleurlingen' ('huge heathendom in our midst... here in the lowveld... in many cases they have already sunk lower than the coloureds' (du Toit 1996, 56)

⁸ See, for example, Hofmeyr (1987), Brink (1987).

A 'documentary' photographic practice recording a typology of impoverished whiteness has been associated with the Carnegie Commission of Research into White Poverty which travelled the country in 1929 and published its findings in 1932. Michael Godby's relatively brief comparative discussion of these images in relation to the 'second' Carnegie Investigation into poverty amongst South Africans 1983 begins to analyse some images from the published volumes of the first commission.⁹ But while he comments on the 'low status of photography in the Carnegie Commission' he never mentions or discusses its meticulously compiled albums.¹⁰ The recent 'Lines of Sight' exhibition (1999)¹¹ which sought to bring together a range of South African photographs contained one enlargement of a page from the (archived) Carnegie Commission Album of 1929/32, but no other, or earlier, photographs exploring themes of 'white' poverty. With this paper, I begin to trace a longer trajectory of *armblankes* photographed, albeit still restricted to ca. 1916-1929.

Once embarked on this study I was struck by the extent to which popular participation in the construction of Afrikaner nationalist culture during the crucial period of the 1910s and 1920s took place through visual representation and specifically photography. In the historiography of Afrikaner nationalism, this aspect of its mobilisation remains virtually unexplored¹². This was the period in which numbers of entrepreneurs, politicians and members of a range of cultural and philanthropic organisations participated in the construction of 'Afrikaner' culture and identities. No hegemonic or unified Afrikaner nationalist discourse or political movement was established by the late 1920s - nationalist ideas were certainly communicated with

⁹ M. Godby, 'The Evolution of documentary photography in South Africa as shown in a comparison between the Carnegie Inquiries into poverty (1932 and 1984) in Lundstrom, Jan-Erik and Pierre, Katarina (eds.) *Democracy's Images: photography and visual art after apartheid*. (Uppsala Konsteum 1999)

¹⁰ Ibid., p34.

¹¹ The exhibition was organised to coincide with the conference 'Encounters with Photography: Photographing people in Southern Africa, 1860-1999' (SA museum, 1999)

¹² An interesting exception is Isabel Hofmeyr's research on Gustav Preller's efforts to popularise the Voortrekker narrative, which, although not specifically focused on photographs, explores the intensely visual aspect of his prose work of Gustav Preller and his foray into film-making. See 'Popularising history: the case of Gustav Preller', African Studies Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, August 1987.

uneven success, particularly in rural spaces and to urbanised working class families¹³ (Hofmeyr 1987, Kruger 1992, Du Toit 1996). However, nationalist historians were able to establish the key motifs of a popularised *volksgeskiedenis*, and women's welfare associations, journalists and other members of the Afrikaans petty-bourgeoisie articulated a robust discourse of *Afrikaans* domesticity and *volksliefdadigheid* (people's philanthropy).¹⁴ Whilst thinking through the particular ways in which Afrikaner nationalists racialised the subjects of their photographs (particularly, 'poorer' people) as variously within and outside of the sphere of *blank*, I therefore attempt to provide a broader perspective on how written text and photographic images were combined in *Die Huisgenoot's* pages. In what ways did emergent Afrikaner nationalist discourses involve an interplay between image and word? Specifically, how did Afrikaner nationalists express anxieties about the dangers posed by increased 'white poverty' through the visual technologies available to them?

Such cultural and philanthropic projects also participated in a larger context in which the meaning of South Africa's racial franchise was worked out through images that circulated between various, public 'printed' spaces – such as newspapers, magazines, postcards, photographic albums. Entering the often claustrophobic pages of *Die Huisgenoot* certainly involves encounters with convoluted, peculiarly Afrikaner nationalist *verbeelding/uitbeelding* (imagination/imageings), but also recognizing genres of photography circulating more widely in southern Africa. I therefore also begin to explore the relationship between an emergent Afrikaans 'imagewor(l)d'¹⁵ and

¹³ I. Hofmeyr, 'Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnic Identity, 1902-1925' in Marks, S. and Trapido, S. (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London: Longman, 1987); L. Kruger, 'Gender, Community and Identity: Women and Afrikanernationalism in the Volksmoeder discourse of *Die Boerevrou*, 1919-1931 (M.A., UCT, 1991).

¹⁴ This chronology draws on Hofmeyr, 'Building a Nation from Words', Kruger, 'Gender, Community and Identity' and du Toit 'The Nurturing of Afrikaner Nationalism' and differs from that established by such authors as O'Meara (1983) and Moodie (1975).

¹⁵ Here I refer to Deborah Poole's notion of 'imageworld' – with which she stresses 'simultaneously the material and social nature of both vision and representation. Seeing and representing are 'material', insofar as they constitute means of intervening in the world...'; social 'because they 'occur in historically specific networks of social relations'. Drawing on the art historian Pollock, Poole argues that "the efficacy of representation relies on a ceaseless exchange with other representations". The 'image world' is formed by 'a combination of these relationships of referral and exchange among images themselves, and the social and discursive relations connecting image-makers and consumers' (*Vision, Race and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World*, 1997, p7) My own word play

a wider circuit of commodified images in order to explore whether one can indeed isolate a discreet Afrikaner nationalist visual-verbal discourse in the period examined here.

This is not a comprehensive study – although I do focus on a publication of considerable significance for Afrikaner nationalist mobilisation. I discuss the interplay between snapshot and word in the pages of *Die Huisgenoot* - a cultural magazine crucial to the building of Afrikaner nationalist identities for many decades. I plan to extend my project to include *The Industrial and Social Review*, published from by the Pact-controlled Department of Labour. This carefully bilingual journal articulated state policy with respect to ‘civilised labour’, and sought to publicise state-sponsored projects aimed at rehabilitating landless whites. In its pages, photographs frequently appeared alongside print. It is against these varied and changing representations of *blanke* poor and working-class people that the published and archived photographic oeuvre of the Carnegie Commission of 1929-1932 should be analysed. Compared to earlier efforts, this was a far more extensive, complex and coherent project to create a narrative of photographic images anchored and explained by written words. Whilst incorporating many elements of contemporary popular photography, the commission’s work re-cast representations of poverty significantly at a time when racialised concepts of citizenry and of South Africa as a modernising, white nation were crucially shaped by various, often mutually reinforcing visual discourses.

1. ‘Met de kodak gewapend’ (‘armed with kodak’):

Snapshots in *Die Huisgenoot*, 1916-c.1928

a) Amateur photography in the construction of a volkgeskiedenis

The crucial period of Afrikaner nationalist mobilising that began soon South African war and accelerated from the 1910s took place when commercial studio photography was long established. By the late 19th century, many Dutch-Afrikaans middle-class and wealthier farming families compiled albums, commissioned and circulated cartes de visite. They may have participated in acquiring the commodified images of ‘native

(imageworld/imageworld) seeks to emphasise the interaction of word and image, and avoids

life' that many English colonials liked to paste into albums from at least the 1850s.¹⁶ Moreover, the 'Kodak revolution' also reached South Africa soon after this innovation of 1888, and numbers of (probably primarily middle-class) people participated in leisure activities involving hand-held cameras from the 1890s.¹⁷ The 'entire economy of image production' had also been recast in the 1880s when new technical developments enabled 'the economical, limitless reproduction of photographs' on paper. Some of the journals launched early in the century¹⁸ were quick to make some use of photography. *De Goede Hoop*, a cultural-religious magazine based in the Cape and published from 1903, and *Die Brandwag* (The Sentinel - launched in the Transvaal in 1910) drew on genres of portrait and landscape photography to add intermittent interest to its pages. But it was in the pages of *De Huisgenoot* launched by the Afrikaanse Taal Vereniging (Afrikaans Language Association) in 1916 and published from Cape Town that an 'Afrikaans' popular photography came into its own.

Hofmeyr (1987) correctly argues that those attempting to reach an Afrikaans readership could not assume that people had a 'strong sense of themselves as Afrikaners' at a time when 'the 'traditional' Afrikaner community was itself crumbling'. She describes the range of projects launched to cultivate a stronger and more clearly defined ethnic identity – Afrikaans magazines featured prominently

the awkward usage of 'text' to refer to printed words.

¹⁶ This last point is pure guesswork. See Karel Schoeman, *The Face of the Country: A South African Family Album, 1860-1900* for a general impression of 19th century photographic practices. I must still research the nature of 'Dutch-Afrikaans' albums. The Killie Campbell Archive has a number of examples of 19th century albums of 'native life' that belonged to English speakers in the eastern Cape and Natal, and that consist of images marketed in sets by local commercial photographers.

¹⁷ George Eastman's innovation was important not only for 'the technical invention of flexible film and winder' in his hand-held camera. He also radically changed the way in which photographic products was marketed by introducing 'a fully industrialised process of production' thus creating a new category of 'amateur' photographers who needed no particular technical expertise as they could now have their negatives developed in Kodak's factories (J. Tagg, *The Burden of Representation. Essays on Photographs and Histories* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press 1988), p55.

¹⁸ To my knowledge, Dutch journals and newspapers of the 1890s and during the South African war produced and/or marketed in the Cape still made no use of photographs. However, I must still verify this.

amongst these. Such endeavours 'amounted to, in effect a redefinition of everyday life' as Afrikaans¹⁹. What historians have failed to note was the extent to which the magazine involved an active readership by drawing on established visual discourses and practices of 'amateur' photography. In its first issue *De Huisgenoot** announced a monthly competition, explaining that it aimed to make visible the country's beauty (wat schoonst Zuid-Afrika bezit'/the beauty South Africa has (lit. 'owns')) 'niet alleen in woord, maar ook in beeld' (not only through words, but also through images). It encouraged readers to wander 'met de kodak gewapend door't veld of langs't strand van de zee... en't mooie wat men daar ziet op de gevoelige plaat op te vangen' (armed with their kodak through veld or along the beach... to capture the beauty they see on the sensitive plate) and submit the results to the magazine. Elaborating on the possibilities for photographic creativity, *De Huisgenoot* explained:

Laat een ieder, die eigen genomen foto's heeft van mooie natuurtaferelen, historische gebouwen en monumenten, enz., enz., een afdruk aan ons kantoor... inzenden.²⁰
(Let everyone with their own photo's of pretty nature scenes, historic buildings and monuments etc. etc. send a print to our... office)

The competition fast became one area of enthusiastic reader participation. Indeed, while the magazine readily published efforts to write Dutch/Afrikaans poetry and short stories, it had no letter page. For the first seven years of its existence, it apparently employed no official photographer although pictures were evidently often provided by the magazine's staff or by solicited writers and accompanied their articles. Large numbers of photographs sent in by readers (mostly with the name and hometown/farm of the sender noted below) also graced the pages of *Die Huisgenoot*. Indeed, it was through the readily available visual technology of hand-held cameras, and probably largely through Kodak's postal network and factories that readers inserted images of themselves and their world into this 'Afrikaans' space.

The fairly wide brief given to prospective participants certainly elicited a range of images – those judged best were frequently grouped together on the *Fotografie Wedstrijd* (Photography Competition) page, but a larger selection was scattered

¹⁹ I. Hofmeyr, 'Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnic Identity, 1902-1925' in Marks, S. and Trapido, S. (eds), *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism in Twentieth Century South Africa* (London: Longman, 1987), 110-111.

²⁰ *De Huisgenoot*, May 1916.

somewhat arbitrarily through columns of print. Many photographs produced by participants belonged to visual genres well established in southern Africa associated with 'familial' photography or with commercially available postcards that were also often pasted into albums.²¹ These included portraits of spouses and children, pictures of middle-class families engaged in leisurely 'nature' outings, of tranquil scenes at public parks, holiday snapshots, amateur ethnographic pictures of 'native life', hunting expeditions. Regular reminders (from 1918) that prints must be original and that 'prentposkaarte' (picture postcards) were not acceptable confirm that participants were also familiar with contemporary, mass-produced, commodified images.

Perhaps the editors of *Die Huisgenoot* added such laconically ethnicising captions as 'n Afrikaanse Boer en sij Vrouw met hul drie Honde' (An Afrikaans Farmer with his Wife and three Dogs) and 'Een Afrikaanse dochter' (An Afrikaans Girl) to some of these contributions – although readers were asked to provide written descriptions with their snapshots (Figure 2).²² The many scenes of *plaaslewe* (farming life) and photographs of farmland was perhaps a more particularly 'Afrikaans' addition to the possibilities for the photographic framing of 'landscape' in South Africa. These images contributed to the elaboration of (and Kodak cameras enabled a popular participation in) a discourse that associated *grond* (land) with Afrikaner also articulated in popular prose and poetry (Figures 3 - 5).²³

²¹ I must still research some of these practises in more detail. Visual histories centered on Europe emphasise that during the 19th century such commodified, serialised images as cartes de visite were inserted into albums sold for this purpose. The Killie Campbell archive in Durban has a number of albums in which series of photographs marketed by southern African studio photographers (mostly from Natal, also the eastern Cape) were pasted. By the 1910s, many people were putting postcards into albums – sometimes combining personal and postcard images.

²² *Die Huisgenoot*, December 1919, *De Huisgenoot*, January 1917.

²³ See A. Coetzee, 'n Hele Os vir 'n Ou Broodmes: Grond en die Plaasnarratief sedert 1595 (Van Schaik: Cape Town 2000) for an exploration of the Afrikaans 'plaasroman' as point of entry into a fascinating discussion of 'Afrikaner' identity and a discourse of 'grond' (roughly, ground/earth) within the broader context of South Africa's colonial history of land dispossession. It is often difficult to distinguish these from a more generalised, colonial 'landscape' photography, and perhaps they should also be seen as a variation on this theme. Pictures of waterfalls or rock formations often seem to situate them on particular farms. For example, 'Waterval op Welbedacht, Clanwilliam' and 'Watervalle op Johannesburg, Suid-Rhodesie', both in *Die Huisgenoot* of March 1919 and 'Op de Plaats Bossiespruit, Distrikt Kroonstad' in the September 1917 edition. . See also August 1916, 'Een vracht hooi, die de eerste prijs behaalde op de tentoonstelling te Paarl in 1914. 'plaats 'L'Arbri' bij Franshoek', 1918, month?; 'Zonsonderchang te Daljosafat.', 'Het Dresseren van Jonge Paarden', March 1918; 'Op 'n plaas in die distrik Pietersburg', April 1920. Some of these photographs such as

A specifically Afrikaner nationalist genre of imagemaking was certainly encouraged by the magazine. *Die Huisgenoot*'s own (unsolicited) early photographs included images recording 'nasionale feeste', buildings attributed with a voortrekker past, (more prosaically) scenes from agricultural shows, and photographs of Boer generals. Pictures sent in for early competitions were unlikely to have been taken specifically for this monthly event – in fact even in later years, numbers of photographs were still evidently chosen from readers' existing collections.

The particular way in which editors placed the work of reader-photographers also suggest the extent to which *Die Huisgenoot* could draw on established genres of 'amateur' photography and private photo' compilations in fashioning a visuality expressive of an 'Afrikaner' identity. Rather predictably, first prize for the first competition (figure 6) went to a photograph of a sea-side monument to settler history – with 'nature' shots coming third and second. Grouped together firmly by the album-like framing, two unpeopled landscape shots, variously of shore-line and mountain pass, complemented the memorial to a Dutch sea-farer hero, celebrating 'the beauty South Africa own(ed)' through spaces that could symbolise the passage-ways traversed by European forebears as they entered into, and settled what became their colony. The patterned backdrop probably positioned these now publicly shared images (their individual authors duly acknowledged) of 'history' and 'nature' within an imagined 'personal' space reminiscent of the privately owned, commercially produced albums in which many South Africans of settler origin were pasting their own collections of photographic post-cards and snapshots.²⁴

'Traptijd' and 'Koring-wan' on 'Mesklip, Namakwaland' (October 1919) were of black labourers at work. I discuss this later in this paper. Some, like 'Kersmis-Ontspanning by Kromelenboog, jagersfontein' (February 1920) were also about hunting.

²⁴ This claim needs to be further investigated via research on private albums from this time: currently, this analysis is speculative. Perhaps this practice also drew on public, commercialised conventions for framing 'history' and 'nature' already available in circulating in the southern African visual economy. A possible source was advertisements that the South African Railways and Harbours placed in newspapers and magazines. At least, the advertisements that SARH produced in *Die Huisgenoot* of the early 1920s followed similar conventions of framing – I have not yet established when they were first produced.

Participants' choice of subject together with – crucially – editorial choice and juxtaposition of pictures, as well as printed comments on the photographs certainly created composite texts that contributed towards the construction of a visual-verbal discourse variously imbued with 'history' and celebrating (a South African? an Afrikaans?) modernity. On another 1916 *Wedstrijd* page, as usual with three winning photo's, a boy posed on a tumbled stone wall in a picture captioned 'Oude Kafferhut at Vechtkop' (Old Caffir hut at Battle-kop). The *Huisgenoot* appreciated this contribution as quaint evidence of 'de kunstvaardigheid van de kaffers' (the artfulness of the caffirs)* in building structures for defence in war. This was also the 'historiese' site where famous voortrekker Sarel Cilliers defeated 'n paar duizend Matabelen' (a few thousand Matabeles). Indeed, the smiling boy seems to wear a replica of Boer-regalia, complete with arm-sling. Moreover, below this snapshot the competition's winning picture of Cape Town's pier at night is complemented by a similar, German city-scape taken by 'mej. (miss) de Villiers in 1913'. The latter images were surely chosen for their contrast to primitive building practices, their inter-play affirming Afrikaans connections to a superior, European modernity.²⁵

Readers of *Die Huisgenoot* certainly responded well to the oft-repeated suggestion that they submit photographs of historical buildings or monuments (from the first edition, the magazine itself provided frequent examples.)²⁶ In this *uit-beelding** of history, stone structures in public spaces often took on the politicized weight of herinnering.* *Huisgenoot* readers submitted Very few photographs taken during the South African war. A picture published in a 1918 edition did show 'kaffertrouwerij gedurende die Boer-Britse oorlog' (Caffir wedding during the Boer-British war).

* The word 'kaffer' was probably only widely adopted in written Dutch to refer to Africans in the early 20th century – it was certainly used pervasively in *Die Huisgenoot*. I am not aware of historical research on whether, when, and why a general shift of vocabulary from 'inboorling' (a 19th century term that indicates indigenous origin and loosely correlates with 'native') and 'zwart' (black) to a word more heavily imbued with racial and racist meaning occurred.

²⁵ *De Huisgenoot*, July 1916.

²⁶ For example, 'Monument vir die Vijf Burgers gesneuwel met die Jameson inval...', *Die Huisgenoot*, November 1918; 'Onthulling van die Vrouwemonument op Potchefstroom', Jan. 1919, 'Onthulling, Vrouwenmonument, Potchefstroom...', March 1919; 'Ds A.J. Louw by die Steenhoop, bloedrivier, Dingaansfees 1920', Feb. 1921.

* 'Uitbeelding' means *envisioning* but my wordplay here includes *out-visioning* – moreover, 'beeld' means 'image' as well as 'sculpture'.

Apparently, the white dresses and neat suits of participants showed ‘n merkwaardige weelde toe die meeste Boervrouens hard vir ‘n stukkje kos moes werk’ (remarkable wealth when most Boer women had to work hard for a bit of food). But the choice of subject of an adjacent photograph was more common: ‘n Afrikaanse gedenkteken’ (An Afrikaans memorial) a stone kearn where Boer rebels had been shot in 1901.²⁷ Following the lead of magazines like *Die Brandwag* which copiously publicised numbers of monuments, particularly the *Vrouenmonument* in Bloemfontein from 1913, many *memento mori* were framings of this and other memorials - mostly also in honour of female and child victims of the war - built across the country in the context of nationalist mobilisation. Crucially, these snapshots recorded public, politicised commitment to remembrance.

Some amateur photographers went to great lengths to arrange a performance of identity for their camera. H. de Leeuw from Bethlehem in the Free State (fig. 4) celebrated an affinity for European winters and a certain imagined continental panache: ‘Ek het gedurende een nag die water laat loop deur ‘n besproeiingspijp wat op ‘n boom gespuit het’ (One night I let water flow through an irrigation pipe directed at a tree). The result was ‘n Verijste Boom’ (A Frozen Tree) with impressive icicles under which a gently smiling young man reclined in a fur cap, smartly cut jacket and bow-tie (apparently the tree did not survive). (Figure 7)²⁸ Such elaborate fantasies of European whiteness were fairly unusual – *Die Huisgenoot* was energetically helping to create and promote another genre of performance. Opposite one *Fotografie Wedstrijd* page, a large group portrait of actors in ‘Die Hoop van Suid-Afrika’ (The Hope of South Africa) appeared. This was an allegorical drama by Langenhoven (rising star in popular Afrikaner literature) that on tour complete with Jan Van Riebeeck, Voortrekkers, Zulu warriors (black-face style), Boer War generals and English empire builders (etc.)²⁹ Such plays were part of a larger effort to create and popularise a voortrekker history. Performing the past and recording such

²⁷ *De Huisgenoot*, October 1918

²⁸ *De Huisgenoot*,

²⁹ The play was performed by Afrikaans amateur dramatic societies in a number of towns in the late 1910s and 1920s – a number of photographs of touring performers were also published. Langenhoven’s ‘Die vrou van Suid-Afrika’ also toured, with a similar range of historical characters. *Die Huisgenoot*, Februarie 1917, anuary 1918.

performances on photographs were important aspects of nationalist mobilisation.³⁰ For example, *Die Huisgenoot* of 1917 published a carefully posed photograph showing women from prominent Afrikaner nationalist families in 'Voortrekker' dress at a Dingaan's Day commemoration - a reader's snapshot sent from Barkley-East in 1919 showed the winner of a voortrekker dress competition posing with her prize (See also Figures 8-9).

Such performances drew upon and complemented another, favourite way of *imaging* the past: through photographs of persons who were themselves pronounced 'historical'. From the very beginning, *Die Huisgenoot* featured its own pictures of famous, usually deceased Boer leaders, poets or important *dominees* on the cover, complemented by a 'Levenschets' (Biography) inside. Hand-drawn, decorative lines were often used as frames, invoking honorific traditions of remembrance associated with familial portraiture for images of leaders of the *volk*. Such portraits also circulated outside the pages of the magazine – in the fast-growing number of popular publications constructing an 'Afrikaner' past, and in framed photographs mounted in private homes.³¹

Die Huisgenoot certainly participated energetically in the construction of a Voortrekker past. Indeed, the pre-occupation with a popularised 'Afrikaner' history was also reflected in choice of books sent to *Fotografie-Wedstrijd* winners. Writers in *Die Huisgenoot* elaborated and depended upon an ambitious project, launched some ten years earlier and driven in large part by journalist and historian Gustav Preller to create and popularise a heroic, violent and poignant *volksgeskiedenis* of famous leaders and of ordinary people. Hofmeyr also stresses that Preller's written works painted vivid images of the Great Trek that would shape people's perception of it for decades after. Preller wrote a series of best-selling popular histories and edited trekker diaries with intense and detailed descriptions of both 'everyday life' on the trek and tragic, brave scenes of battle against black savages. He also organised travelling slide

³⁰ Such public performances were annually organised around 16 December, the Day of the Vow or Dingaans' Day, particularly from the middle and late 1910s.

³¹ The latter point is based on scattered descriptions and anecdotal evidence – whether it was already a fairly wide-spread practice in the 1910s and 1920s to signal political alliance by having (for example) a picture of General Hertzog (not Smuts or Botha) in houses that also

(‘magic lantern’) shows and in 1916 he produced a film about the Battle of Blood River. Trekker leaders were household names for many Afrikaans speakers by the 1910s.³² If low levels of literacy and access to books was a worrying impediment for Afrikaner nationalist projects, the detailed descriptions of massacre scenes in Preller’s books were copied in paintings that, by 1916, graced the walls of at least some poorer Afrikaans speakers³³ Preller’s labours included extensive interviews conducted by himself or helpers solicited through newspaper advertisements in order to collect ‘de kleinere incidenten en persoonlike geschiedenissen’ (the smaller incidents and personal histories). The narratives he popularised often blended with those he collected so that key motifs of suffering and violence was claimed as individual memory by those interviewed. He also tried to obtain photographs of interviewees, explaining that ‘wij verlangen ‘n mooi duidelik gezicht, met al de oude plooien van zwaarkrij en verdriet daarin te zien’ (‘We require a clearly delineated face, with all the wrinkles of suffering and sorrow visible’) ‘Ordinary people’ as well as leaders of the Voortrek thus became heroes and martyrs in his epic rendering of the Afrikaner’s past.³⁴

Die Huisgenoot made liberal use of photographs in publicising the notion of elderly people as valued participants in Trekker history. An early edition of the magazine featured a portrait of stern-faced, elderly widow Oosthuyse, proclaiming her ‘Een Getuige van Oude Dagen’ (A Witness to Old Days). A detailed account of her Voortrekker past (‘veel kon zij vertellen van de Grote Trek.... de droeve, bloedige dagen heeft zij met de andere Voortrekkers doorgemaakt’ / ‘she could tell much of the Great trek... she experienced the grievous, bloody days together with the other Voortrekkers’) complemented the image. ‘De ouden van dagen gaan en ze laten een

offered Herzogkoekies for tea is not clear. I must still trace from when such portraits were being marketed.

³² I. Hofmeyr, ‘Popularising history: the case of Gustav Preller’, African Studies Seminar Paper, University of the Witwatersrand, August 1987.

³³ Ibid., p.4; M. du Toit ‘Gustav Preller and the construction of Afrikaner Nationalism: A Case Study in the Popularisation of History (Honours dissertation, UCT 1988), pp. 24-5, 64; L. Rompel-Koopman, *Verloren en Herwonnen Levens* (Pretoria 1917). The writer describes visiting an old woman and her daughter whose sparse but her well-kept home included one such painting: ‘Tegen de gepleisterde muren trof ons te midden van vele portretten, ‘n grote prent in Zwarte lijst: ‘n voorstelling van de slag vij Bloedrivier. ‘t Deed de oude moeder zichtbaar goed, dat wij met zo ‘n genoegende deze prent bekeken...’

³⁴ M. du Toit, ‘Gustav Preller and the construction of Afrikaner Nationalism’, p.26.

plek open, die niet meer aangevuld kan worden' (The old of days pass on and they leave a space that cannot be filled).³⁵ Age was itself a reason for publishing a portrait of Martha Rood posing with her great grandchildren and one of her four sisters (Figure.10). The women [posed] against a cloth backdrop apparently mounted in the open – perhaps on their eastern Cape farm. Together with the chosen title, 'Een Sterk Geslacht' (A Strong Generation), the images conveyed not only the physical tenacity of the very old, but also to the rooted strength of a vanishing generation of women who – with their dark dresses, a psalm book and (as noted by the writer) snuff box in their hands - embodied a shared and venerable past. Indeed, the photographs were traces of the as yet living and the dead - while Mrs Roodt still did 'allerlei werk' (all kinds of work), one of the pictured sisters no longer lived.³⁶

In 1920, the customary portrait on the magazine's cover and the accompanying biography inside honoured not a well-known leader but 'Sarel Hendrik van Vuuren en sy vrouw Johanna Magrieta van Vuuren', a couple who qualified simply as 'Ons Oumense' (our old people') '[Hulle] sterwe uit, en met hulle heengaan verloor ons baie wat vir ons van onberekenbare waarde is' ('They are dying out, and with their passing we lose much of immeasurable value') explained *Die Huisgenoot*. The photograph shows the couple seated on two straight-backed chairs, dressed in customary and old-fashioned black. His walkingstick touches, and her wide skirt shadows bare earth. The elegant carving of their wooden chairs against the corrugated iron wall behind them was perhaps meant to suggest the *eenvoud* - honest simplicity of the *Afrikaanse kultuur* that they personified. It was as *oude voortrekkers* that they qualified to grace the front cover. That Sarel van Vuuren had few appropriate memories to offer mattered little – a cryptic comment attributed to him ('Ja, nefie, dit was 'n mooi geskiedenis gewees, maar dit was 'n benouwde geskiedenis!'/yes, nephew, it was a good history, but frightening!') served as cue to move into the bloody Trek massacre script as the writer imagined the memories of barbaarse cruelties motivating this remark (Figure 11).³⁷

³⁵ *De Huisgenoot*, October 1916.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, October 1917.

³⁷ *Die Huisgenoot*, January 1920

By the early 1920s, readers' photographic contributions included numbers of aged individuals: 'Tant Annie Stander, 93 jaar oud', 'Vier hoog bejaarde broers', 'Twee voortrekkers', 'Goed op pad na honderd', 'honderd-en-een jaar oud' ('Aunt Annie Stander 93 years old', 'Four highly aged brothers', 'Two voortrekkers', 'Well on the way to Hundred') read some of the captions. 'Dit is 'n kiekie van die ou heer J.A.A. Zietsman, geneem laaste Dingaansfees op Paardekraal' ('This is a snapshot of the old gentleman J.A.A. zietsman, taken at the last Dingaans festival at Paardekraal') wrote J.A. Bosman of Johannesburg. Such images were typically scattered somewhat eclectically across columns of print that often bore no direct relation to the images, yet often combined to form a text saturated with notions of Afrikaans culture and heritage. For example, J.D. Balt's photo of 'Vijf Geslagte' Hulle woon op die plaas Bosman, Magaliesberg. Die name is....' ('Five Generations. They live on the farm Bosman, Magaliesberg. The names are...') showed members of the Grobler family, aged 3 to 85. Their portrait appeared together with other reader *kiekies* (snapshots) - two of people in leisurely postures by waterfalls and one of yet another *Vrouemonument* inauguration. Surrounding text expounded on the superiority of Afrikaans jackal skin ('Die Afrikaanse is eg, maar dit kan nie altyd van 'n uitlandse artikel gese word nie')/'The Afrikaans/African is genuine, but this is not always the case of a foreign article') and 'Mij Kombuis' ('Ons woon in een van die groot ou Hollandse huise...' / 'My Kitchen' (We live in one of those old Dutch houses...'))³⁸

If some Afrikaans-speakers roamed their neighbourhoods for likely historical persons, they also photographed the recipients of racially and ethnically directed philanthropy. In a 1920 edition, an elderly couple's picture enlivens the pages devoted to the Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging's philanthropic activities (a regular feature) together with another reader's picture of 'Weeskinders van Betlehem, OVS, op 'n uitstappie na die Seekus' (Orphans from Bethlehem, Free State, on an outing to the coast'). This showed a large number of children in neatly assembled rows, apparently wearing identical dresses, posing in front of a train. A 1919 snapshot from Miss M. Kotze of Dewetsdorp showed 'Weesmeisies' ('Orphan girls') from an orphanage in Ladybrand picking (according to the caption) peas in a field. *Die Huisgenoot's* haphazard use of amateur photographs here created a striking contrast with a vision of

³⁸ *Die Huisgenoot*, 'April 1918; July 1920; April 1922., Januarie 1920., April 1920.,

(middle-class?) leisurely activity: an adjacent *kieke* from another contributor was of ‘n skuitjie in die Valsrivier: Soos kan gesien word, is die skuitjie so na aan sink dat ‘n mens eers kant-toe moet gaan as jy wil lag’ / small boat on the Valsriver: As you can see, the boat is so close to sinking that one has to go ashore before laughing’). Afrikaans welfare organisations also intermittently published photographs of those benefiting from their efforts. However, it was particularly the genre of *historiese persone* that provided creative opportunities for Afrikaner nationalists concerned about attitudes towards impoverished *volksgeenote* to address this issue.

b) Armsalige voortrekkers : Historical strategies towards solving the ‘poor white problem’*

In the same year as a Dutch Reformed Church’s *volkskongres* (people’s congress) on the ‘arme blanke probleem’ (1916) and in a period when writers in Dutch-Afrikaans magazines and newspapers increasingly wrote about this issue, popular historian Erik Stockenstrom³⁹ published ‘Die Tragiese Loopbaan van ‘n Voortrekkersvrou’ (The Tragic Career of a Voortrekker woman) complemented by his picture of ‘Mevr. Klasina Maria Johanna van Dale’ born ‘6 Julie, 1830’ (Figure 12). An apparently verbatim chronicle of massacres by Zulu warriors that left Klasina bereft of her father, with multiple assegai wounds and a pious, fatally ill mother blended into memories of her subsequent itinerant and impoverished existence (‘...ik moes maar rondswerwe en bij ander mense woon...’/I had to move from place to place, living with other people...’). She eked out an existence on saltpans and diamondfields until, old, she moved to dismal city lodgings where her crippled son begged for their survival. As Stockenstrom remarked, ‘n klein kamertjie in ‘n akelige ou gebou in Johannesburg – siedaar die woning van die historiese persoon!’ (‘a tiny room in an awful building in Johannesburg – behold the dwelling of this historical person!’)

In *DieHuisgenoot*’s visualwor(l)d, portraits were sometimes explicitly referred to as imbued with evidence of the innate qualities of character. Commenting on a

November 1919.

* Impoverished/pitiful voortrekkers

³⁹ Stockenstrom would publish *Die Boervrou: Moeder van haar Volk* (The Boerwoman/wife: Mother of her Nation) in 1919.

photograph probably contributed by a reader, *Die Huisgenoot*'s editors emphasised how General De Wet's features were inscribed with his ability to lead: 'Zoals men opmerkt is't haar van de oude boere-generaal grijzer geworden, doch ligt nog steeds diezelfde vastberaden trek op zijn gezicht, die de man van moed en karakter kenmerkt' ('one will notice that although the venerable Boer general has become more grey, his face remains that of a man of courage and character'.)⁴⁰ But visual evidence of a nobility honed by participation in violent, tragic events was particularly evoked by writer-photographers in order to claim elderly, impoverished people as members of the *volk*. If history was inscribed upon her body ('die vijf steke op die regterarm is nog almal sigbaar'/the five cuts on her arm are all still visible') her photograph was visual record of heroic *voortrekker* identity. It shows her seated in bare surroundings, an open book (the treasured hymnbook mentioned in the text) on her lap, her shadowed eyes sharply on the camera:

Die ou heldin het mij die eer gegee om haar af te neem; en op haar portret sal die lesers dadelik bespeur, dat daar iets treffends, iets edels is in die gesig van die sesentagtigjarige voortrekkersvrouw – 'n dogter van Suid-Afrika...
(The old heroine gave me the right to take her picture; and readers will immediately notice from her portraint something striking, something noble about the face of this eighty-six year old voortrekker woman – a daughter of South Africa...)

A month later, Stockenstrom's acknowledgment of donations was accompanied by another example of an 'historiese dame' (historical lady), again placing an elderly, impoverished person in an dramatic *volksverlede* (people's past). A detailed account of an 'Afrikaanse burger' (Afrikaans citizen) and his family's strenuous defence 'tot die bitter einde teen Hottentotse troepe' ('to the bitter end against Hottentot soldiers') was followed by the explanation that Stockenstrom's needy subject was the widow of 'die seuntjie, wat in die veerbed gerol is' ('the boy rolled in the feathermattress') to hide him from flying bullets. Thus placed within the national past in visceral language reminiscent of Trekkers' memories of violence (although the episode referred to was that of Slachtersnek)⁴¹, Mrs Bezuidenhout merited aid from fellow Afrikaners. She was photographed seated against the corrugated iron wall of (the story made this clear) of her 'armsalige' (povertystricken, pitiful) shack. The image of her dressed in

⁴⁰ *De Huisgenoot*, June 1916.

⁴¹ Stockenstrom was drawing on an already well established mythology around the 'Slachtersnek Rebellion'. See Heese, *Slachtersnek en sy Mense*.

somber Sunday best, hands uncertainly folded on her lap (Fig. 13), formed an implicit contrast to an obituary on the opposite page – and the oval-frame portrait of smartly dressed Mrs General Joubert, another ‘sterke voortrekkersvrouw’.

But once again, Stockenstrom emphasised that facial features told of the ‘ongeweinsde deugde, hoffelikheid en gasvrijheid van die Afrikaanse voorgeslag’ (‘deep honour, courtesy and hospitality’ of previous Afrikaans generations’).⁴² In this respect, he was both depending on the deeply held notion of the camera as a machine that offered a ‘mechanically transcribed truth’ and appealing to long popular beliefs that photographic portraits could reflect an individual’s personality and character, indeed his or her moral qualities⁴³. In England and the European continent, it was for the rising class of 19th century middle-class patrons that the camera became the visual technology of the self – and its portraits elaborate sets of signs ‘that symbolically evoke(d) the bourgeois cultural ideal’. As Lalvani explains, the ‘body was raised to the visibility of a text, its signs deciphered to disclose the moral qualities residing therein... in bourgeois portraiture, it (was) especially the arrangements of heads, shoulders, and hands – “as if those parts of our body were our truth” that g(a)ve evidence of the discursive power of physiognomy’. Indeed, if the bodies portrayed were crucially gendered, the discourses of physiognomy also functioned as class signifiers. ‘(C)ulturally sophisticated’ poses reminiscent of an earlier, aristocratic portraiture were read as distinct from the ‘blunt frontality with which the criminal, the insane, the poor... and the colonial subject’ were ‘forced to confront the camera’s gaze’ in an age when the camera also became a pervasive tool of control and surveillance.⁴⁴

Over the next several years occasional pictures of *historiese persone* contributed by philanthropic organisations or by individual readers were of people whose

⁴² *De Huisgenoot*, September 1916. Preller used at least one such photograph to similar effect in 1917. In one of several articles about a ‘voortrekkerbedelaarsgeval’ (voortrekker-beggar-case) he sought to demonstrate that a man dismissed as a beggar by well-off Afrikaners in Pretoria was in fact a Voortrekker – participant in events central to the making of his *volk*. In one of many articles about ‘Jan Valentijn Botha’, Preller published two photographs of Botha demonstrating this man as ‘die toonbeeld van ons grootste vraagstuk’ (our greatest problem visualised’).

⁴³ J. Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, p.40; S. Lalvani, *Photography, Vision and the Production of Modern Bodies* (State University of New York Press, 1996), p.48.

impoverished circumstances were noted with regret or with requests for assistance. It is the the physical presence of these men and women that holds my eye, demanding interpretation – the deferential, even submissive postures of these ‘aristocrats of the Voortrek’ strained against the surrounding prose account of participation in a heroic past. For example, ‘Ou Moeder Byneveld’, is pictured twice in a story which details her poverty, calm hospitality and ‘interessante vertellings’ (interesting tales) about the *trek* - the ‘Vrouevereniging’ (Women’s Society), ‘Merweville’ ends by soliciting funds. She first appears in chiaroscuro, her face emerging from deep shadow – doleful and dramatic, this picture differs to some extent from most portraits of elderly people, usually taken outside in strong light. The second portrait is intriguing for its cloth or painted backdrop – fairly unusual in this time of Kodak snapshots. Mr Byneveld (the caption poignantly mentions that he no longer lives) faces the camera standing, his wife is seated. Their positioning corresponds with many middle-class portraits of married couples but their postures signal uncertainty, even deference – as if this was a photo-session organised by people with superior status. He, wearing an over-large suit, feet awkwardly positioned, holds his hat in his hand. She, enveloped in a presentable flowery dress, has a large *kappie* on her lap and her folded hands are held awkwardly high in front of her chest (Figure 14).

How would the photographers or readers of *Die Huisgenoot* have understood these images? By the early 20th century and particularly with the advent of Kodak portraiture, middle-class codes of ‘pose and posture’ that signalled individual worth and propertied selves had been established within middle-class portraiture must have evolved significantly from 19th century conventions. Cover portraits such as that of Trekker Retief’s grand-daughter showed hands and shoulders arranged in a conventionalised display of class confidence. But most Kodak portraits were ‘frontal’ poses and also mostly dispensed with the studio props symbolic of middle-class status.⁴⁵ Moreover, the corrugated iron ‘backdrop’ of the front cover portrait ‘ons oumense’ had signalled the wider inclusiveness that Afrikaner nationalism’s performances of history sought. This was a genre of photography within which one

⁴⁴ S. Lalvani, *ibid.*, p.66.

⁴⁵ Tagg and Lalvani both emphasise that 19th century British middle-classes favoured a sideways turn of the body derived from ‘the cultivated asymmetries of aristocratic posture’ (J.Tagg, *The Burden of Representation*, 35).

A. Weideman sent *Die Huisgenoot* a picture of his father (or grandfather) seated in (seemingly) the corner of a bare backyard, wearing an ill-fitting jacket and holding a walking stick so positioned that it merges with the broomstick propped against a wall.⁴⁶ Even so, old Mr Weideman wore his hat on his head - the postures of physical deference in the portraits of needy Voortrekkers are striking. Perhaps these were performative collaborations seeking to express both respectability and need within conventions that would 'speak to' Afrikaners of paternalist relations between *bywoner*⁴⁷ and *boer*. At times however, poor people were photographed for their incidental 'historical' value, not in order to solicit help. A portrait from 1922, contributed by a reader from a village in the Cape, was of the 'kleinseun van Frederik Bezuidenhout, wat in die Slagternekse Opstand was' (grandson of Frederik Bezuidenhout, who participated in the Slachtersnek Uprising). It shows a poorly dressed man standing against a wall and posing somewhat clumsily with a rifle, his hat lying at his feet (figure 15).

In the early 1920s photographs of poorer Afrikaans speakers were also printed as part of a new genre of writing that blended modern *vaderlandse* travel with motifs of *trek*. As C. Kriel explained in 'die Noordweste' (The Northwest), published in 1920:

Afrikaners wat in ander lande gereis het, het gewoonlik baie te vertel wat interessant is... Maar die Afrikaner wat 'n reis – kort of lank – deur sy eie land en onder sy eie mense onderneem, vind daarin 'n element van genot en geluk wat onmoontlik elders in die wêreld te vinde is.⁴⁸

[Afrikaners who have travelled in other lands usually have many interesting things to tell... But the Afrikaner who undertakes a journey – short or long – through his own land and amongst his own people, finds an element of pleasure and happiness that will not be found anywhere else in the world]

Singing the praises of the Afrikaans landscape ('die woeste eentonigheid van die dorre vlaktes... spreek tot hom in 'n taal wat hy kan verstaan – want dit is sy vaderland!'/the wild monotony of the barren plains ... speaks to him in a language he can understand because this is his fatherland!), Kriel also emphasised the pleasures of 'toeriste' (tourists) meeting fellow Afrikaners, rich and poor:

⁴⁶ *Die Huisgenoot*, July 1921.

⁴⁷ Afrikaans for sharecropper.

⁴⁸ *Die Huisgenoot*, September 1920

... Die teerste snare van die Afrikanerhart word egter eers dan aangeraak wanneer hy met sy landgenote in aanraking kom daar in hulle daaglikse omgewing, en daar van hulle wereldberoemde gasvryheid mag geniet. In die pragtige huis van die welaf boer of dorpsbewoner, of in die hartbeeshuisie of tent van die arm trekboer – oral dieselfde vriendelike gesigte, dieselfde hartlikheid. Dit is die slag dat ‘n mens trots voel op die feit dat jy ook tot die volk behoort waaraan daardie mense behoort.⁴⁹ (The Afrikanerhart is most deeply touched when he comes into contact with his fellow countrymen in their daily surroundings, and enjoys their world famous hospitality. In the beautiful house of a well-to-do farmer or in the hartbeeshuis or tent of the poor trekboer – everywhere are the same friendly faces, the same generous spirit. It is then that you feel proud of the fact that you also belong to the *volk* to which these people belong.)

A number of photographs celebrated the Namaqualand and northern Cape landscape and the pleasures of touring – a *kokerboom* and donkey cart, the travellers variously in their motor car and in a boat crossing the Orange river, a *koppie* ‘waar die boesmans eers gewoon het’ (where the bushmen first lived). Portraits also featured. Oom Albert and Tant Hessie Nel of the village Brandvlei posed in front of their wagon (the trekker motif contrasting nicely to tourists’ modern transport, pictured in an adjacent snapshot) – the text also praised them as veterans of the South African war. While the Nels do not appear well do to from the photographs, a trekboer family encountered by the travellers was singled out as poor yet hospitable, versed in Afrikaans folklore and intent on cleanliness. In their photograph, the Oakland (their car)’s imposing fender flanks the trekkers and their tent in front of which the visitors are seated. On the right, children perch on top of a wagon, again providing a balance of old and new. The prose description used the photographic occasion to emphasise trekker neatness and cleanliness whilst inserting Kriel’s subjects into a longer *volksgeskiedenis* of the English vilifying Afrikaners as inferior:

Verskeie onsimpatieke skrywers het in die verlede die Afrikaner beskrywe as ‘n onsinde like, onreine wese. Dat dit ‘n growwe laster is, behoef geen betoog nie. Sels die lede van ons volk wat hulle lewe op die wa en in ‘n tent moet slyt, en wat met baie min geriewe bekend is, behou reinheid en sindelikheid nog as ‘n karaktertrek. Dit was op ‘n Saterdagmiddag dat ons by die tent waarvan ons hier ‘n illustrasie gee, gekom het. Alles vas skoon en netjies. Die tentvloer en ‘n groot oppervlakte voor die tent was net die oggend gesmeer. Die vrou en haar kindertjies was in hul daaglikse klere gestee, wat egter skoon en heel was... toe die portret geneem is, wou sy eers met geweld eers die kinders hulle Sondagklere aantrek, en wou sy self glad nie uitkom nie. Met baie gesoebat het die afnemer tog sy sin gekry...⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

(In the past, various unsympathetic writers have described the Afrikaner as a dirty, unclean being. That this is libel needs no reiteration. Even those of our people who must eke out their lives in wagon and tent, and who know very few luxuries, still retain the trait of cleanliness. We arrived at the tent of which we provide illustration here on a Saturday afternoon. All was neat and tidy. Just that morning the tent floor and a large surface in front of the tent had been freshly covered [and polished with dung]. The woman and her children wore their everyday clothes, neat and whole... when I wanted to take their portrait she first insisted on changing the children into their Sunday clothes and refused to come outside herself. But with much pleading the photographer did get what he wanted.)

From 1924-1925, when *Die Huisgenoot*'s regular features began to include articles on *binnelandse vakansie-oorde* (domestic/S.A. holiday resorts), frequent descriptions of *oorsese* (overseas) journeys, occasional accounts of intrepid motor-car explorations of the South African interior, and a motor page that pictured *toermotors* (touring cars), typically crossing a mountain pass or braving sand dunes, the magazine also published an series of articles on 'Die Swerwers: Sketse uit die Dorslandtrek' (The Nomads: Sketches from the Thirstland Trek).⁵¹ Here, a history of Dutch-Afrikaans speakers who migrated north in the late 19th century, eventually settling in southern Angola, was told as an extension of Groot Trek history. The familiar motifs of endurance reappeared in a narrative less about encounters with murderous savages than about the adventures of hunting in Africa's still wilder spaces.

Some of the many photographs complement this verbal presentation neatly. In one, hunters pose with trophies, rifles in hand, cartridge slung over their chests (black companions, similarly armed and attired, also appear within the frame although positioned slightly behind the 'trekkers')⁵². Another pictures 'n Welaf transportryer in Angola met sy wa en perd' ('a well-to-do transport driver with his wagon and horse').⁵³ This mention of economic circumstance is very rare – but other pictures are evidently of people who are poor. The photographs are similar in composition to the

⁵¹ For example, 'Ons Motorafdeling', 16 and 26 January 1926; 'Met 'n Motor deur Namakwaland', 30 October 1925; 'Oom Boy en Baas Danie gaan oor See', 18 December 1925. South African Railways and Harbour also began to place elaborately arranged pictures of such natural attractions as 'mere en lagunes' (lakes and lagoons) 4 December 1925. In the same issue, Castle Beer placed advertisements celebrating the touring car with 'n klompie boere' (a few farmers/boers) posing with a kist of beer. Kodak also began to market its products around vakansie (holidays) away from home.

⁵² Ibid., 16 January 1926.

many trekker portraits long published in *Die Huisgenoot* – although most of the latter had included a wall of a house or a garden in the frame, while in the portrait of the du Plessis family, only thick bush is in evidence. While the *dorslandtrekkers* seem to pose in their best clothes, their posture does not quite dovetail with the prose sketch of energetic, even heroic adventurers. This is most striking in the portrait of the elderly Oom Faan Grobler and his wife.⁵⁴ While the former, wearing an old jacket and trousers, sits with his chair angled slightly rightwards, Tant Sielie radiates unhappiness and uncertainty –she is turned away from her husband, her head slightly bowed and eyes down-cast, her hand touches her other arm in a gesture of discomfort. This portrait suggests how gendered identities and relationships may be physically manifested or expressed through photographic practices intent on celebrating dominant notions of family. But the traces of physical presence here are similar to that of other, poorer ‘Afrikaners’ claimed as ‘historical’ – visual markers of ‘posture’ that create a sense of difference between these and more ‘well-do-do’ persons claimed as *voortrekkers*, working against the Nationalist attempts to emphasise common identity across propertied and landless ‘Afrikaners’.⁵⁵

The syndicated pages of news photography together with ‘news’ photographs formally credited to *Die Huisgenoot* that began to dominate *Die Huisgenoot*’s pages from 1924 also contained occasional images of poorer whites. While readers’ contributions of old histories continued steadily, the editorial directions for amateur photography also suddenly changed from asking for ‘newsworthy’, not ‘historical’ significance). *Die Huisgenoot*’s numerous images constituting ‘news’ in

⁵³ Ibid., 9 January 1925.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ In the ‘Exhibition’ section of *The Colonising Camera* relating to Patricia Hayes’ contribution to the book (see p3 above) a selection of Hahn’s photographs, here titled ‘Wings of Power’, are preceded by several intriguing pictures pertaining to the resettlement of Angola boers, ‘poorer whites’, in ‘Namibia from 1928.’ The fairly brief accompanying text explain the Afrikaner nationalist impetus of the resettlement project and of images that depict the ‘Angola boers’ as culturally rooted, indeed as ‘voortrekkers’. This presentation of the photographs is also suggestive in their juxtaposition of white power (particularly in the pictures taken by Hahn of the huge fleet of cars provided by the S.A. Administration of South West Africa and overleaf where Hahn ‘takes flight’ in a show of athletic prowess), and hints of *trekker* poverty (also a possible reading of a photograph by Hahn of a trekker dwelling). Together, the photographs, with their juxtaposition of modern, colonial state power, trekker cultural rootedness and (more obliquely) material vulnerability, appear to have interesting similarities to Afrikaner nationalist visual discourse that appeared in *Die Huisgenoot* from the 1910s and was also applied to *dorslandtrekkers* in its pages.

included a few about 'delwers wat op Elandsputte, Lichtenburg, met sak en pak kom om hulle geluk te soek' (diggers who come with all their belongings to Elandsputte, Lichtenburg to seek their luck) in 1926. Some photographs showed diggers racing to stake their claims. 'n Tiepiese voorbeeld van die behuising op die delwery naby Ventersdorp' (a typical example of the housing at the diggings near Ventersdorp' showed patched tents and shacks on a bare expanse of earth (Fig.14).⁵⁶ If amateur contributors were still sending in *kiekies* of Afrikaans-speakers who were incidentally poor ('Twee tiepiese Bosvelders wat die vlakvark geskiet het'/'Two typical Bosvelders who shot the bushpig'), *Die Huisgenoot*'s news photographer also contributed 'n Welbekende ou figuur' (A wellknown old fellow) in Johannesburg, an itinerant hawker photographed for his eccentric looks (Figure 16).⁵⁷

I introduced the subject of this paper by asking how Afrikaner nationalists expressed anxieties about the dangers posed by increased 'white poverty' through photography. The images I have presented show that becoming 'Afrikaner' also happened through the taking of amateur photographs as Afrikaans speakers from across South (indeed, southern) Africa sent their pictures to *Die Huisgenoot*. I have thus begun reconstruct something of what such photographs meant to those who pointed the camera and chose what to include or leave outside the frame, of what the 'photographic moment' or its result meant to some of their subjects, and what the editors of *Die Huisgenoot* tried to convey through their combination of word and image. But while I have clearly demonstrated how this visual 'technology of the self'⁵⁸ combined with printed words to fashion notions of Afrikaans/Afrikaner identity, the centrality of 'race' in image-texts placed in *Die Huisgenoot* has largely been assumed rather than demonstrated. How, exactly, do the images I have discussed relate to questions of racialised identity? How can my discussion contribute to efforts to understand, specifically, how an 'Afrikaans', 'blank' - and more broadly, a South African white identity developed in the early twentieth century?

⁵⁶ *Die Huisgenoot*, 7 May 1926; 2 July 1926; 9 July 1926.

⁵⁷ *Die Huisgenoot*, 6 November 1925; 28 August 1925.

In order to answer such questions, it is important to attempt moving beyond assumptions about racialised identity that might relate to our own 'imageworld' of some eighty years later. My present study is also too circumscribed to explore ideas about race expressed in *Die Huisgenoot* against earlier, 19th century notions of 'being blank', 'Boer', 'bywoner' and exactly how these categories overlapped – or to examine possibly competing British and Dutch-Afrikaans notions of 'race' during and immediately after the South African war. But even within the limits I have set myself, a simple assumption that a prior, transparent and coherent idea of 'blank' was projected onto photographs in *Die Huisgenoot* is clearly problematic. After all, 'the seemingly individual act of seeing and the more obviously social act of representing' occur in 'historically specific networks of social relations'⁵⁹ (Poole 1997: 7). Hence the explicit question: did notions of 'race' feature in the meanings constructed through these photographs of *historiese persone* – how?

I have discussed photographs from 1916-ca.1920 of people presented to an imagined Afrikaner audience as poor but *volksgenote* and therefore deserving of financial aid. I have also discussed images of individuals apparently poor but perhaps not (or not overtly) pictured for their poverty – inserted into a shared national past, they are included as part of an exciting narrative about Afrikaner *dorslandtrekkers*. Some were presented as historical oddities (Bezuidenhout) or as items of current 'news' (diggers at Elandsputte). None of the individuals photographed are ever named as 'blank' or indeed as *blanke armen/ armbblank*. Were such notions part of the meaning consciously constructed through these images – moreover, how could they have been read as expressive of racialised identity? Such questions can only be answered through a closer discussion how race was constructed more generally through the photographs created as part of, or entered into the verbal-visual spaces of *Die Huisgenoot*. Inevitably, this also involves a more explicit exploration of popular photography as a repressive technology of 'power and knowledge' in South Africa of the 1910s and 1920s.

⁵⁸ I have applied this phrase from C. Burns's discussion of letter writing ('Censorship and Affection: South African Women's Letters during World War Two', draft paper presented at African Studies Seminar, UND, 2000).

⁵⁹ D. Poole, *Vision, Race and Modernity*, p 7

3. *Black verbeeld: race, racism and the meaning of armblank in the imagewo(r)ld of Afrikaner nationalism*

I began this paper with a description of a *fotografie wedstrijd* portrait memorable because it represents a contradictory overlap of different photographic genres. Miss Buyske's photograph is interesting for the apparently respectful framing of its subjects (Figure 1). Here, an African family is seated on chairs against a somehow eerie reverse imitation, as 'real' farmscape echoes the artificial backdrops favoured in many contemporary studio photographs in which props function to affirm, celebrate (or express aspirations towards) middleclass status. The strangeness of the figures against landscape also relates to a certain resemblance to western religious paintings of the holy family. That this is a deliberate reference is certainly suggested by *Die Huisgenoot's* comments about the image:

De foto vant't Albinokafferkind is genomen op de plaats van de heer Hendrik Muller te Cverfontein (sic). De ouders zijn heel trots op hun blank kind en hun uitleg is, dat God hun't blanke kind gaf en dat't zwarte hun eigen kind is [The photograph of the Albino-kaffir-child was taken on the farm of Mr Hendrik Muller of Cverfontein (sic). The parents are quite proud of their white child and they explain that God gave them their white child while the black one is their own.]

The photographer's choice of subject clearly relates to a fairly common urge on the part of 'white' South African photographers to record freaks of nature, in this case the impossibility of whiteness in a 'kafferkind'. Her work gestures towards a validation of this black family by positioning them within the 'honorific' conventions of middleclass portraiture whilst translating their personal narrative (that theirs is a god-given child) into visual form (a native nativity).⁶⁰ Perhaps (if we push a little at the

⁶⁰ An interesting comparative perspective that also evokes many 'familial' photographs from the South African context is provided by Marianne Hirsch in her introduction to *The Familial Gaze* (University Press of New England, Hanover 1999) where she discusses contributions to this volume 'focusing on formal portraits of nursemaids, nannies, servants or slave women (mostly black) holding white infant children on their laps' (p.xiv). Laura Wexler discusses an image of a slave, or recently freed servant woman photographed holding her employer/owner's baby. This is an image relating 'to a long symbolic tradition, that of the Madonna and Child' but that are 'weirdly skewed rendition(s) of the Christian story': 'Motherhood may be what the genre marks as woman's great accomplishment, but sitting for the camera as the white woman sat, in the pose that the white woman held, holding, in fact, the white woman's baby, within the iconographical space and actual society that claimed for white women exclusive right to occupancy, the slave or servant brings into existence not her

limits of historical probability) a photographic print was also given to the family – it is certainly not hard to imagine that this picture, with its definite resemblance to portraits from ‘The Black Photo Album’, ca. 1900, collected by Mofokeng (1999), could have been a valued possession. For Mofokeng, such photographs are ‘(i)images of people in a state of contemplation, self-dramatisation – or – maybe – at a moment of conflict – confrontation’⁶¹. But the portraits he presents are carefully annotated with information provided by their owners who treasure these as *seriti/is’thunzi* (shades of the past)⁶² – with names and histories of personal achievements, particularly of mission-related pasts and prosperous farming histories. In Miss Buyske and *Die Huisgenoot*’s and reproduction and contextualisation of a ‘black family’, the figures are rendered anonymous, indeed are heavily racialised. An example of the endless innovation displayed by Afrikaner nationalists for neologisms involving ‘kaffer’ is central to this process (‘Albinokafferkind’).⁶³ But the picture’s juxtaposition to other visions of landscaped whiteness and colonial triumph – a tranquil Bloemfontein park with pristine swans, a tall rock formation with a couple striking a leisurely pose at the highest point also contribute. The private meanings that those photographed could have made with Buyske’s composition of figures and farmscape also differ crucially from the possibilities for snapshots from my own familial album. The man’s bare feet, angled uncertainly towards the edge of the frame, provides a counterpoint to his companion’s meticulous clothing and suggests vulnerable limits to selfpresentation. Skin touches grass and earth ... which of course,

own family’s precious keepsake, but a monument of doubleness and double entendre...’ particularly poignant in response to the tradition invoked’ (pp.255-6).

⁶¹ S. Mofokeng, ‘The Black Photo Album’, in *Anthology of African and Indian Ocean Photography, Revue Noire* 1999, 70.

⁶² Mofokeng actually uses these words when discussing his own relationship to the photographs he collected – a title he has given to the series of photograph is ‘Chasing Shadows’. As he explains, the words *seriti* and *is’thunzi* are not really equivalents for the English ‘shadow’: ‘in African languages its meaning is the exact opposite... this word cannot be easily be given a single meaning. In everyday use it can mean equally aura, presence, dignity, confidence, strength, spirit, essence, prestige or wellbeing. It can also express the experience of being loved or feared. A person’s *seriti/is’thunzi* can be positive or negative and exert a powerful influence...’ (Ibid.,72)

⁶³ As with other germanic languages, Afrikaans lends itself to the construction of new word combinations – the obsessive combination of ‘kaffer’ with a variety of nouns fill three closely printed pages of the Afrikaans dictionary *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal* and suggests the extent to which many ‘white’ Afrikaans speakers participated in constructing a minutely racialised worldview.

is legislated white in the year of 1917, four years after the Union of South Africa passed its Land Act.

If this was a variation on the theme of *plaas* in emergent 'Afrikaans' photography, another portrait from 1919 visualised propertied space and black subject-ivity in even more circumscribed fashion (Figure 17). The bridal pair and their two companions posing in this picture stand in front of a wall and stiffly face the camera. It is impossible to tell whether they felt themselves put on display or participated freely in this photographic moment. Their expressions are solemn, and finery has certainly been assembled with care – all are richly dressed in beadwork and embroidered clothes and hold a number of objects (umbrellas, walking-sticks, cloth or *karos*, an enamel container) in their hands. The picture is set amongst several poems – in one, Louis Leipoldt speaks of limits to creative thinking: 'As ek van verbeelding praat/Dan glo maar ek preek van 'n paradijs/waarheen net 'n engel te perd kan reis...' (When I speak of imagination, then believe that I preach of a paradise/to which only an angel on horseback can ride...)⁶⁴ H.D. Viljoen from the appropriately named *Kaallaagte*^{*} and credited with taking the portrait provided this information about his subjects:

No. 3 en 4 is Laer en sij bruid. Laer het die naam gekrij omdat hij gebore is toe sij vader as agterrijer van mnr. Viljoen saam op kommando was. Hij is nou al sewe jaar die werf-Kaffer van mnr. Viljoen. Die trouwpartij is opgemaak met kraalornament, in allerlei patrone op eg kaffer-manier vervaardig.⁶⁵

(No. 3 and 4 are Laer and his bride and was thus named because he was born when his father was *agterrijer* of Mr Viljoen. He has already been Mr Viljoen's yard-caffir for seven years. The wedding party wears decorative beadwork, made in a variety of patterns e.g. in the caffir manner.)

The photographer's verbalised *ver-beelding*^{*} thus narrowed the meaning he attributed to this picture to the unambiguous confines of a racist world of propertied Boer masters and black servants, framing his subjects firmly as attractively exotic but well-tamed and loyal blacks. In *Die Huisgenoot*'s placing, the portrait (captioned 'n Halfbeskaafde Basoetoe-Bruilof' /A Half Civilized Basotho Wedding) is also implicitly contrasted with sentimental *kiekies* of civilised, Afrikaans domesticity.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *Die Huisgenoot*, August 1919.

^{*} The approximate translation for the farm's name is bare (in the sense of open and unsheltered), low-lying plain.

⁶⁵ *Die Huisgenoot*, August 1919.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 'Miss C.C. Euvrard from 'Noord-Melsetter, Suid-Rhodesie' contributed her snapshot of a pet duiker and its adoptive human family. The even more sentimental

Viljoen was bringing at least two recognisable strands of a racialising visual discourse to bear in the domestic space of his own *agterplaas* - a discourse through which the meaning of 'native' (more often, 'kaffer') was being refined. The first strand had strong roots in 19th colonial photography – as long ago as the 1850s, studio photographers in southern Africa had marketed portraits of native subjects for inclusion in private albums. In the late 19th century, sets of stereoscopic cards had continued this tradition – from the early 1900s, hefty books on *The Essential Kafir* (1904) was published by the likes of Dudley Kidd. Now, numbers of hand-held camera-owners were making their own, quasi-ethnographic images of natives customs – here, they were probably influenced by the visual possibilities suggested by commercial postcards and such publications as the South African Harbour and Railways Magazine.⁶⁷

From the start *Die Huisgenoot*, which published occasional articles on *ekspedities* to exotic locations⁶⁸, was enthusiastic about such efforts. In 1917 the editors praised a Bloemfontein participant's submission of 'n Kafferbruiloft' (A Caffir Wedding), explaining that because the photo recorded the impact of modern civilisation on the customs of 'de inboorlingen' (the natives) it would be valuable for future researchers. Besides, 'het gehele toneeltjie met zijn moderne Kaapse kar maak't een enigzins lachwekkende indruk...' (the spectacle complete with modern Cape cart is so comical...)⁶⁹ On another page which celebrated, variously, a hunter in east Africa posed triumphantly on top of his dead elephant, the receding lines of an East London railway bridge and a photograph of women in Nyasaland preparing maize meal, *Die*

portrait of 'Klein Jantjie en die Suikerpot (Little Jan and the Sugar Pot) also appeared.

⁶⁷ This is a hopefully educated guess. I plan to specifically compare postcard images, and images from private albums compiles in this period, with the images published in *Die Huisgenoot*. I must also still consider the extent to which this enthusiasm for photographs of inboorling (native) customs was related to other popular publications. I have not yet looked at the SAHR magazine, which was published at this time – SAHR images only seem to be marketed individually for use in magazines from the mid 1920s and in books from the 1930s.

⁶⁸ 'De Sneewbergen van Nieuw Guinea' (The Snow Mountains of New Guinea), September 1916

⁶⁹ *Die Huisgenoot*, November 1917. This edition also had an article relating the exploits of HA Lorentz together with several pictures of the expedition posing on rock outcrops and native 'Papoeas' apparently photographed going about their lives. 'The Scottish Geographical Magazine' was the acknowledged source.

Huisgenoot singled out the latter effort to record 'native' life for special praise. 'Zo 'n foto te maken, vooral wanneer men op reis is, geeft later een bron van genot...' (to take such a picture, especially when traveling, later provides much pleasure....)⁷⁰ In the late 1910 and early 1920s, numbers of *Wedstrijd* participants sent photographs in this amateur 'ethnographic' vein, often with written descriptions about strange customs appended to their pictures.⁷¹ These also appeared near to occasional scenes from *plaaslewe*^{*} recording labourers at work. From 1924, photographs from the South African Harbour and Railways began to accompany articles on tribal life, partly displacing reader-photographer's efforts.⁷²

The second strand of visual discourse that Viljoen articulated was perhaps related to 19th century photographic practices of 'native' portraiture, which had sometimes included pictures of deposed chiefs or otherwise politically interesting and subdued subjects.⁷³ Although *Die Huisgenoot* did not specifically encourage their reader-photographers to commemorate black *historiese persone*, a large proportion of them did so on their own initiative. In 1916 J.S. De Leeuw of Clarens (Free State), otherwise a prolific photographer of Drakensberg rock formations, sent the magazine a picture of three individuals, an elderly man, woman and a younger man, standing in front of a hut. The former's elaborately patterned garment, similar in design to a priests' robe, seems intended to designate authority and status (his wife fades into shadow but her bare shoulders are visible, the other man wears more ordinary shirt and trousers). This is not, however, what made the print 'interessant' for *Die Huisgenoot*. De Leeuw describes 'de oude kaffer 'Kokojam' (the old caffir 'Kokojam') as 'Een Ooggetuie van de Moord op Piet Retief' (An Eye-witness to the

⁷⁰ *Die Huisgenoot*, June 1917.

⁷¹ For example, 'n Buidengewone groot Lipornament', October 1918; 'Maketees-meide', May 1918, 'Drie Zoeloemeiden in Feestkostuum', March 1918, 'n Kaffer-Paalhut van Twee Verdiepings op Kwaggashoek... S- Rhodesie', September 1919.

^{*} farming life

⁷² 'n groep meide besig met perskeskil op Tierfontein, Potchefstroom' April 1925. 'Traptijd op Mesklip, Namakwaland', October 1919. Soeloellegendes en gewoontes, 28 March 1924. Pictures specifically produced by SARH, for example of A 'Zulu man' saluting or of the interior of a 'Zulu hut', would resurface frequently in Afrikaans magazines as well as various English publications (sometimes differently cropped or adjusted through collage) particularly in the 1930s. *Die Huisgenoot*, 28 December 1923; 28 March 1924; 7 december 1923.

⁷³ B. Harris, 'Photography in colonial discourse: the making of 'the other' in southern Africa, c. 1850-1950, in *The Colonising Camera*, p. 23.

Murder of Piet Retief) - accidentally present at this tragic episode of the voortrekker epic.⁷⁴

A steady stream of similar contributions continued into the 1920s. 'Ou Andries, 100 jaar oud' (Old Andries, 100 years old) had been *agterryer* for trek leader Andries Pretorius. 'n Interessante ou Aia' (An Interesting Old Aya) featured because she remembered her *baas*, *nooi* and her own child being murdered by 'die Kaffers' in Natal. Others were 'Koos Jories... Hy het dikwels vertel hoe hy vir pres. Reitz op sy rug gedra het...'; 'Hierdie ou hottentot is al oor die 120 jaar...'; 'Tom is die seun van 'n vroeere kafferkaptein, Moos. Hy het in 1920 nog bewoon by die Van-Aardt-familie, bekend in verband met die Slagtersnekse opstand' ('Koos Jories... He often told how he carried Pres. Reitz on his back...'; 'This old hottentot is already more than 120 years old...'; 'Tom is the son of a former caffir captain, Moos. In 1920 he still lived with the Van Aardt family, known in connection with the Slagtersnek revolt'). Elderly men and women also featured as ex-slaves: 'Tom was vyftien jaar oud toe hy as slaaf gevang is' (Tom was fifteen years old when he was enslaved); 'n Ou Aia Uit die Slawetyd' (An Old Aya from Slave Period) (Figures 18-20)⁷⁵

If *Die Huisgenoot*'s amateur photographers derived satisfaction from inserting black people into the *voortrekker* narrative or otherwise identifying them as historically interesting, the pictures and accompanying written comments often differed markedly from *oude voortrekker* portraits and their frequent prose companion pieces of black savagery. First and most obviously, contributors explicitly inserted the individuals photographed into the Afrikaner nationalist past as servants. (In the popularised prose Great Trek narrative and paintings, Trekkers represented civilisation pitted against violent, barbarian blacks)⁷⁶. Moreover, such descriptions were often firmly extended into the present: 'sy werk met die naald, sonder bril, mooi, fyn en netjies. Sy woon nou op die plaas Beervlei, Willowmore' (she does needlework without glasses, pretty, delicate and neat. She now lives on the farm Beervlei, Willowmore'). Koos Juries, recently deceased, had been 'by uitstek ywerig en getrou' (very industrious and loyal). It was important for De Leeuw to designate the old man 'Kokojam' as landless: 'De

⁷⁴ *De Huisgenoot*, March 1921; Tom, October 1923; November 1920; 21 March 1924; 18 Dec. 1925

⁷⁵ Amateur photographers may have been 'recording history' presented to them in voortrekker prose narratives – I am not sure if *agterryers* did feature.

oude kaffer leeft nog en woont in het veroverde grondgebied nabij het dorpje Clarens, O.V.S.’ (The old caffir is still alive and resident in the conquered territory near the village Clarens, O.F.S). If pictures of former slaves sometimes detailed the scars they bore, others blandly reassigned individuals their former status (‘Een oude slavin’/‘An old slave woman’).

The portraits of black historic servants sometimes resembled those of individuals designated ‘Afrikaners’ but differences are also often discernible. Again, photographers preferred their subjects to pose outside. Some were pictured sitting down, but few sat on the wooden or wicker chairs in which their betters were made comfortable. A number of snapshots are of individuals standing in a yard or on a pavement, perhaps suggesting a more cursory interaction in preparation for the photograph. Even so, some of the men (fewer of the women) photographed as *agterryers* or as servants from a chiefly lineage exhibit a confident bodily posture similar to many portraits of elderly *voortrekkers*. But an *oude slavin* in Cape Town (here simply named ‘Soes’) was photographed standing on a pavement or possibly inside a yard, her hand touching an old, whitewashed stone wall that might well have dated from the *slawetyd*, perhaps in a gesture of uncertainty (Figure 23). It is difficult to read her expression. Another portrait from Mosselbaai shows an ex-slave woman (here nameless) sitting near a thatched hut or cottage, wearing a white apron and kopdoek with a dark dress. Her head is slightly bowed, one hand holds her other wrist while the latter, right hand seems to press into the flesh above her knee, seemingly in a gesture for support or self-protection. The *ywerig en getroue* (hardworking and loyal) Koos Juries (who is ‘quoted’ calling the photographer ‘my basie’) is also dressed for work in overalls and holds a leather thong in one hand. But this hundred and five year old man seems to participate with pleasure in the photo-session. The camera catches him as, smiling, he pulls himself upright and touches the rim of his hat as if about to doff it in greeting (Figure 24). Moreover, none of these ‘black’ old people – some of whom wear threadbare clothes - were ever photographed for their poverty.

The imagewor(l)d of Afrikaner nationalist print culture therefore participated in an older, wider, colonial visual economy in which Africans were imaged as ‘natives’ interesting for their cultural difference, sometimes for their hapless aspiration towards

modern living - but a 'historicised' native subject-ivity was also constructed through this more specifically Afrikaner nationalist uitbeelding apparently initiated by Kodak camera owners. In *Die Huisgenoot*, reader-photographers participated in constructing variations of racialised Afrikaans identity through contributing to a publication in which self and colonised 'others' were constantly juxtaposed. *Historiese persone* of the *voortrekker* variety (and domestic images of 'Afrikaans' family life) appeared alongside these photographs of native subjects.) Photographs of 'native' culture depicted people racialised as 'kaffer' in various states of tribal or tamed existence. The specific ways in which Africans and ex-slaves were visually inserted into the past and selected as historically interesting constructed them simultaneously as black and as servant subjects (as non-citizens) - thus re-enforcing the meaning of *oude voortrekkers* as Afrikaner citizens, as white and as *baas*.

However, it is the similarities between photographs of black subjects as 'historically' interesting and those of poorer *volksgeenote* that suggest moments of unease, of fissures in the familial portraiture of *volk*. I have argued that Afrikaner nationalists attempted to counter increased poverty amongst Afrikaans *blankes*, and the perceived failure of better-off Afrikaners to claim such people as their own, by casting them as *voortrekkers*. I have already suggested that the portraits are interesting beyond this intent has by contrasting the bodily postures of elderly people such as Bezuidenhout, Byneveld and the *dorslandtrekker* couple with the confident physicality of more well-to-do sitters. But the similarities in self-protective bodily posture between Bezuidenhout, Byneveld and the anonymous slave woman also suggest a relationship of distance and deference between subject and photographer shared across boundaries of 'colour' between the poor. (In fact, the postures of deference exhibited by Mr Byneveld far exceed those of male black *agterryers*, indeed of some black women assigned servant status). Moreover, if a number of photographs speak of class-related distances between 'Afrikaners' while accompanying words declare them members of the *volk*, others reveal no particular intent to honour them as *eie* (own) - that of Bezuidenhout standing with his rifle presents him as of incidental interest in a fashion very similar to how black historical servants are framed.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ As J.A. Heese has shown, boer families involved in the Slachtersnek episode and who had liaisons/intermarriages with their African neighbours had been recast as exemplary, heroic white *burgers* (citizens) in the popular histories that appeared from the late 19th century.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that Afrikaner nationalist discursive practices were crucially visual as well as verbal – indeed from its launch in 1916, *Die Huisgenoot*'s 'redefinition of everyday life' as Afrikaans involved an interplay between word and image. The existence and participatory nature of the magazine's photographic project has not previously been noted by historians – yet in the period discussed its *Fotografie Wedstrijd* was possibly more important than short story and poetry competitions in encouraging active participation in and identification with an 'Afrikaans' identity. 'Amateur' photography crucially involved people from across South Africa (indeed, beyond its northern borders) contributing to a public, familial visualisation of *volk*.

This dynamic of individually produced photographs incorporated into an explicitly 'Afrikaans' textual space is interesting for the way in which such 'amateur' photographic practices accrued new meaning in a publicly shared space. One intriguing question that my research also raises concerns the apparent fluidity between 'private' visual practices centred on notions of 'family' and publicly circulating images. By the mid-1910s, the private consumption of commercially produced images was certainly long a feature of the southern African visual economy. Thus 19th century and early 20th century albums compiled by expatriates in Natal, the eastern Cape and Namibia consisted either entirely of commodified images (for example, photographs of 'native life' marketed for inclusion in albums by studio photographers) or combined personally commissioned or produced images with commercially available pictures (also those circulating 'publicly' as postcards). But the Afrikaner nationalist initiatives in the age of Kodak cameras created a different imbrication of publicly circulated and personally produced imagery. It would seem likely that photographic prints sent to *Die Huisgenoot* were often still kept in personal collections when copies appeared in the magazines' public pages, where new

Where *bywoners* fit into this narrative had been the subject of particular attention by Preller throughout his project, who also sought to prove how arduous trek experiences caused poverty.

meanings were created through juxtapositions of varied print and visual contributions – perhaps also subtly shifting the personal significance of those images in albums kept at home.

Peculiarly Afrikaner nationalist genres of photographic practice is certainly evident in the propensity for photographing monuments, made into a popular pastime of remembrance with a fair degree of success by Afrikaans cultural magazines. Cameras were also integral to performances of Afrikaner nationalist identity typically organised around *Dingaansdag* – dominant assumptions of this visual technology's ability to 'capture' reality probably lent power to this visualisation of historically rooted selves. This was particularly so for the practice of photographing 'ordinary' people as valued personifications of a shared *volksverlede* – initiated by cultural magazines such as *Die Huisgenoot* and enthusiastically pursued by many reader-photographers in the 1920s. Integral to this genre of nationalist photography was an attempt to represent poorer Afrikaans speakers as members of the *volk* by situating them in key historical narratives created and popularised by Afrikaner nationalists

But it is worth re-emphasising that extending analysis of Afrikaner nationalist 'print culture' to include its visual aspect is particularly interesting because while its contributors often seem to create a largely discreet 'verbal' discourse, *Die Huisgenoot's* visualworld is crucially participant in strands of colonial visual discourse that originated and still circulated far beyond this particular (linguistically, politically circumscribed) public domain. The pages of *Die Huisgenoot* provide a window onto the participation of cultural-political groupings in the newly constituted Union of South Africa in a wider visual economy, and the particular ways in which images and modes of visual representation circulating within and beyond southern Africa could be incorporated into localised modernities and national(ist) identities. My discussion of its pages should not be seen as a discreet study in cultural history but as contributing to attempts to examine the public representations of 'white' South African identity that rapidly took shape from the 1910s and - as Hayes&Rassool has argued and as English-dominated popular regional histories commissioned by city

fathers also demonstrate - assumed new prominence and confidence from the early 1930s.

The particular production of race and of native subject-ivity through Kodak competitions in *Die Huisgenoot* is also worth considering within a wider, comparative colonial and southern African perspective. (Indeed, a study of images produced through hand-held cameras in this period that incorporates a wider South African 'public' might well have interesting results). A number of studies have emphasised the extent to which 'the construction of modern bodies' involved a visual anthropometric discourse from the late 19th century, as well as a parallel colonial visual discourse of deposed, captive, indeed decapitated African leaders.

Hayes&Rassool have also emphasised the extent to which racial anthropology, celebrated as a confidently South African science, involved not only the camera as a scientific tool but also the specular, public circulation and consumption of images from the mid-1920s and particularly in the 1930s.

If such intense 'scopic' attention was focussed on the bodies of those constructed as Bushwomen/men, the visualisation of a racialised South African modernity that cohered around the Empire Exhibition of 1936 also involved coherent images of 'native', African bodies – typically constituted as semi-civilised but tamed by industry, tribal and as outside of history.⁷⁸ Snapshots contributed by *Huisgenoot* readers sometimes resemble such images – I have shown that 'ethnographic' efforts that evince a fascination with tribal custom were often posted to *Die Huisgenoot*. But the accumulating racism of the repetitious assignation 'kaffer' does not involve images that derive from an anthropometric gaze. Indeed, a typology of 'races' is hardly ever evident in *Die Huisgenoot* of 1916-1926.⁷⁹ I have shown that in the period

⁷⁸ For ways in which these images were also, significantly, gendered, see http://www.history.und.ac.za/history3a/the_golden_city.htm, particularly extracts from the chapters 'Native customs and conditions' and 'Native Folklore' (accessible from the above page), also student discussions of these on the course discussion site <http://www.history.und.ac.za/discussion6>.

⁷⁹ Perhaps an article on the Eugen Rischer's ethnographic study of 'Rehoboth-Basters' (8 May 1925) signal the arrival in its pages of a new discursive strand – the accompanying photographic portraits were taken head-and-shoulder frontal and profile typical of racial anthropology. It accompanied a series of photographs of 'Die Opstand van die Rehoboth-basters' (The rebellion of the Rehoboth Basters) similar to Hahn's panoramic photographs of native subjugation.

examined, reader-photographers are much more intent on incorporating ‘black’ people into a shared history – of course, not as *volksgenote* but specifically as loyal servants with *agterryer* and slave pasts.

With this paper, I also began to trace a somewhat longer trajectory of armblankes photographed than has thus far been considered by historians of southern Africa, albeit still frustratingly shortsighted. With the material hitherto gathered through forays into South African libraries, questions about how ‘blank’, ‘armblank’, ‘bywoner’ (sharecropper), ‘Boer’ etc. might have found visual expression before post-war Afrikaner nationalist mobilisation, and projects for the construction of a ‘white’ South African national identity launched from ca. 1910 cannot be addressed. Given the evidence of verbalised anxieties about *arme blanken* from the late 19th century (and of war-time, English representations of Boers as constituting an inferior, uncivilised race) these questions are intriguing. Indeed, in *The Face of the Country: A South African Family album 1860-1900*, Karel Schoeman mentions that an album of “‘South African types’” compiled ca. 1890 includes not only photographs captioned ‘a Kaffir maiden’ and ‘Natives in European costume’ but also ‘a “poor white”’.

This is also a study ‘towards’ further work on photographs of poorer whites published to advertise the state’s civilized labour policies and on the Carnegie Commission’s photographic oeuvre. Even the two pages from the Carnegie Album briefly described in the opening pages of this paper begin to hint at the ways in which this Kodak project was a *reisalbum* (travel album) drawing on contemporary strands of visual discourse – certainly in its framing of landscape and delight in the modern modes of travel (the brand new, American-donated Ford) perhaps in the *uitbeelding* of *plaas/grond* as constitutive of Afrikaner identity, even a romantic identification by Afrikaner intellectuals with *platteland* spaces. The images from the Carnegie Commission album described above also begin to suggest a departure from earlier representations of poorer whites that had emphasised a shared national past. But a thorough discussion of these photographs is material for another paper.

