Please reference as: Liz Stanley ~ î ì í î U] v ‰ Œ • • • Z t Z] š • t Œ] š] v P W > š š Œ • v
Y > Z W Œ } i š [ ] v ~ • ^ š v o Ç Documents of Life Revisited: Narrative & Biographical Methods for a 21st Century Critical Humanism. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

here is a crucial question to ask, and a helpful way of responding to this:

> « how has it come about such a small a number of whites has been able to impose itself on a far greater number of African peoples to achieve its present [1980] position of dominance, exploitation and power?, W L V K R Z H Y H U D T X H V W L R Q W K D W F D Q E H D Q V nineteenth century as it happened not as it turned out » 0 D U N V D Q G $ W P R U H 2)

And as for the nineteenth, so the same question and response also apply to the seventeenth, eighteenth and twentieth centuries: how did a tiny number of white people come to dominate and to institutionalise in the form of apartheid a system of exploitation and power over a large black majority? This chapter, and the wider Whites Writing Whiteness project it is part of, is concHUQHG ZLWK ZKDW consists in and how this might be researched and theorised, including LQ UHODWLRQ WR how it turned out, and it does so by using documents of life

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Letters and correspondence are everyday documents of life strongly characterised by seriality and succession – their ³one thing after another´ temporal aspect – and consequently they provide, not only a humanly rich data source, but one particularly suitable for investigating changes over time. Certainly epistolary scholarship recognises the strongly performative features of letters (Decker 1998), but they also h9 0 Tc[( )] TJ c2 Tm aBT 1 [(souh] TJ3l

How then is social change in South Africa to be explored using the documents of life, the letters and correspondences, that WWW is concerned with? The unfolding usages, variations and changes in whites writing whiteness and its Others is the focus, analysing this around the fundamental V H U L D O L W \ D Q G ³ R Q H longitudinal character of letter-writing in inscribing the processes of social becoming or sociogenesis. Temporality and seriality fundamentally mark the longitudinal exchanges occurring in networks of letter-writing; in addition, letters are not simply representations of the social world but are in themselves a form of social engagement and relationship. Consequently, sociogenesis can be tracked through comparisons of different letter-writers within a figuration and changes in their letter-writing practices over time, changes regarding a whole figuration over time, and comparisons across figurations at different temporal points. WWW therefore investigates 'as it happens¶ D V L W was viewed and written about in an unfolding way, by people in a range of networks unf

examples from WWW research indicat

D JLYHQ ZLWK WKH what was deemed war or not depending on how and where people were situated, and the relationship between what they saw as exceptional and what as ordinary even if conflictual. Also who wrote to whom and why has to be taken into account, for letters are perspectival and express points of view which are shaped by WKH ZULWHU¶V YL of their addresses and what could be expressed to them, not just about self.

P

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materials run from 1820 to the 1940s. Living R Q K H U S D U H Q W V ¶ P L V V L R Q V W D V British Bechuanaland (now part of South Africa), Bessie and Roger Price married in 1861 and trekked first to Shoshong and then Logagen, renamed Molepolole, in the then-Bechuanaland Protectorate (now Botswana). They returned to Kuruman in 1885 when Roger Price was appointed to run the Moffat Institute; then Bessie removed to Cape Town after his death in 1900.

Although referred to in archival finding aids as variously letters, journals, autobiography and reminiscences, % H V V L H 3 U L F H ¶ V Z U L W L Q J V in fact form a genre with D U H their basic form being epistolary. Her journals, autobiographies and reminiscences, focused from 1854 to 1883, have an addressee, with questions and direct address made to them; and her letters are typically written on a succession of dates with their contents often lengthy µ G L D U L V H ¶ G H V F U L S W L Y H They were written to keep in touch with her sisters Jeanie and Helen, her mother, and her children when at school in Britain, and also to record the when, what, how and why of things happening in Shoshong and Molepolole. The context was that post took months to arrive, and so while letters presume a response, this would not be expected to occur in a turn and turn about way; and while the convention is that journals record self-life for self, their day after day aspect lends itself to representing to correspondents her life when opportunities to send letters were as few and far between as receiving them.

% H V V L H 3 U L F H ¶ V contain at times large generalisations about the Bechuana.[1] In I R U L Q V W D Q F H µ W K H G H V S L F D E O H F K D U D F W H U R I W K µ6 D W D Q ¶ V ¶ where people are at the level of the beasts; they are dirty (because greasing their skins) and lazily 46>4<0 0 1 192.65 137.54 Tm [([(Mol)-2(e)fon)] TJi 1 0 0 1 502.54 55

forwardness, useful in providing goods and medicines, and especially welcome as teachers of writing and reading. This is whiteness and those who represent it being successfully kept in their place, which was to provide what was wanted and not to make unwanted incursions on prevailing ways of life.

Overall regarding whites writing whiteness and its Others, % H V V L H 3 U L F H ¶ V O H W W indicate that the closer to the domestic figuration of the Prices and their children, adopted children and servants, then the more likely people are to be named and to be liked and disliked for their own particular behaviours and characters. The further from this, the more that ethnic distinctions are made, and ethnic and other homogenising descriptors (Bechuanas, Boers, traders) are used to characterise people in general terms. In addition, the way Price wrote was highly responsive to the situation and her then-current state of knowledge about people and events, so that initial comments and assessments often give way to later more nuanced ones. And while there are many changes over time, these are not linear or general, but of an up and down and back and forth kind

The sister Bessie Price mainly wrote to, Jeanie, did not keep any of her writings after March 1868. The letters to her children in Britain end in 1883. Her journals and reminiscences span a number of periods, including between 1868 and 1879, but cease thereafter. A small number of letters from 1899 exist, written to the youngest Price daughter, Christian (Kirstie), and also a few around 5 R J H U 3 U L F H ¶ V death in 1900 D G G U H V V H G W R µ Daughters all¶ There is, then, a hiatus between 1883 and 1899-1900. This is a lengthy period in which much would have happened at local and interpersonal levels, while the broader

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The few short later letters are from Kuruman, where the Prices had removed in 1885, and they contain comments unlike those in Bessie Price's previous writings by deploying colour rather than ethnic categories:

> I can't tell you how long for Xmas, yet not impatiently I think, having plenty to do. Also I want to be especially busy for our poor darkies while I have time, having long felt it a bitter reproach that I did so little for them [illegible]
>
> (9 May 1899, MS5971)

important - but needs to be expanded. Did it happen for everyone, in the same way, and at the same time? Relatedly, different material and political circumstances, people and places have to be taken into account, for the letter-writing Bechuanaland missionary wives, Albany gentleman farmers and impoverished Natal tradesmen turned farmer-prospectors discussed

changing views and representations of what was the unfolding present for the people who wrote them.

Many documents of life are researcher-generated in interviews and similar encounters and are in a sense meta

shouldbe the focus if

women in their autobiographical testimonies, and later use of these in memorialisation activities instituted by successive Nationalist governments. Its focus is the time

overtaken by the post-1994 political transition, but it provides a still interesting and readable discussion of the historical construction of whiteness.

% D X U D Q G (2011) Chapter 'Towards a process-oriented methodology: modern social V F L H Q F H U H V H D U F K P H W K R G V D Q G 1 R U E H U W (O L D V ¶ V I L J provides an admirable G L V F X V V L R Q R I K R Z (Qualitative research practice) Zanslations ignore Elias ¶ V emphasis on the processual and refusal to separate the substantive and the theoretical, while their chapter returns to such root matters.

Julie McLeod and Rachel Thompson¶ V (2009) excellent *Researching Social Change: Qualitative Approaches* combines discussing case studies of research-based exemplars with setting out how qualitative researchers can think about and research change in social and inter-personal life. Memory, being, generation, affect and temporality are considered and the principles and practice of Qualitative Longitudinal Research (QLR) helpfully discussed. They H P S K D V L V H W K D W a qualitative approach to longitudinal research L V D E O H W R S U R Y L G H X S ´ V K R W R I U H D O O L Y H V Z L W K D I R F X V R Q S O R W V W R U and recognise W K H µ L Q K H U H Q W V H U L D O L W \ ¶ L W L Q Y R O Y H V (61).

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