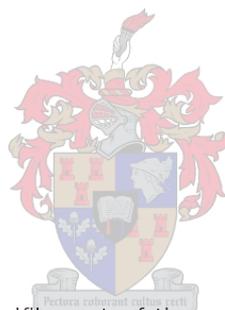


**The Cuff and the Collar:**  
A Contemporary Representation of Seventeenth Century Symbols of  
Power and Oppression at the Cape of Good Hope

Carla Maxine Kruger



This thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Masters of Arts in Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University

Supervisor: Carine Terreblanche  
April 2014

## Abstract

This thesis examines the extent to which the cuff and the collar as semiotic entities played a significant role in the symbolic expression of power and oppression in the seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope. These entities were visually naturalised by the Eurocentric imperialist hegemony at the Cape and offered as undisputed 'truth'. These symbols permeated the collective consciousness of the society at the Cape on both a physical and cognitive level. The white ruff and cuffs, and the shackles of the slaves represented physical restraints, whilst mentally the slaves were confronted with identity construction and deconstruction. 'The self' was pitted against 'the Other', and these European values and hierarchies were enforced on the society at the Cape by creating dualistic relationships. An identity implies a certain amount of power. For this reason, the Europeans stripped the slaves of their identities in order to gain control over them. This theory, together with the investigation into the hybrid characteristic of culture as a product of colonialism and slavery at the Cape, will be established concurrently with the aim of my practical work — *The Ruff/Rough Collection*, *The Shackle Collection*, and *The Soft Steel Collection*. This body of work aims to deconstruct the boundaries and hierarchies established by the cuff and the collar (as symbols of the power and oppression paradigm) at the Cape.

## Opsomming

Hierdie tesis ondersoek die mate waarin die mouboordjie ('cuff') en die kraag ('collar') as semiotiese entiteite 'n beduidende rol gespeel het in die simboliese uitdrukking van mag en onderdrukking aan die Kaap de Goede Hoop in die sewentiende eeu. Hierdie simbole is visueel deur die Eurosentriese imperialistiese leierskap ingevoer en as onbetwisbare waarheid van hul mag en heerskappy voorgehou. Dié simbole het die kollektiewe bewussyn van die samelewing aan die Kaap op 'n fisieke en geestelike vlak geïnfiltreer. Die wit plooiakraag ('ruff') wat die Europeërs gedra het om hulself as 'meesters' te vestig, en die boeie van die slawe het fisieke beperkings verteenwoordig, terwyl die slawe geestelik gekonfronteer is met die opbou en afbreek van hulle identiteit. 'Die ek' is teen 'die Ander' gestel en Europese waardes is op grond van die Eurosentriese ingesteldheid van die 'meesters' op die samelewing afgedwing as 'n dualistiese verhouding. 'n Identiteit impliseer 'n sekere graad van mag. Daarom het die Europeërs die slawe van hulle identiteit gestroop om sodoende mag oor hulle te verkry. Hierdie teorie, asook die ondersoek na die hibriede eienskap van kultuur as 'n produk van kolonialisme en slawerny aan die Kaap, sal konkurrent met die doel van my praktiese werk — *The Ruff/Rough Collection*, *The Shackle Collection* en *The Soft Steel Collection* — gevestig word. Die doel van hierdie versameling kontemporêre juweliersware is om die grense en hiërargieë te dekonstrueer, wat deur die mouboordjie ('cuff') en die kraag ('collar') (as simbole van die mag- en onderdrukkingsparadigma) tot stand gebring is aan die Kaap de Goede Hoop.

## Declaration

By submitting this dissertation, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that production and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

---

Carla Maxine Kruger

---

Date

## Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my family, Isobel Sippel, Martin Kruger and Gabrielle Kruger, as well as my grandparents, Duncan and Mariki Sippel, for their unwavering emotional and financial support during my studies. I would like to thank my housemates, Wilma and LJ, for their continuous support and understanding. I would also like to thank my bursary patrons, for their incredible generosity.

Thank you to my supervisor, Carine Terreblanche, for your support and guidance every step of the way in my practical and theoretical studies. Thank you to my editor, Dr. Wanda Smith, and my Graphic designer, Chantal Curtis.

And lastly thank you to everyone who proof read my thesis and gave me feedback and insights.

## Table of Contents

Title page
Abstract
Declaration
Acknowledgments
Table of contents
List of figures

### Chapter 1: Introduction

<b>1</b>	1.1	Topic: Two Main Thematic Categories
<b>5</b>	1.1.1	The collar and the cuff as semiotic entities at the Cape
<b>6</b>	1.1.2	Power and oppression: The relationship between master and slave
<b>8</b>	1.2	Problem Statement
<b>10</b>	1.3	Theoretical Framework
<b>15</b>	1.4	Research Methodology
<b>15</b>	1.5	Literature Review
<b>17</b>	1.6	Historical Overview
<b>18</b>	1.7	Outline of Chapters

### Chapter 2: The White Collar as Part of the Power Uniform

<b>21</b>	2.1	Introduction
<b>25</b>	2.2	Before Slavery became an Institution at the Cape
<b>27</b>	2.2.1	A Brief Introduction to the Dynamics of Power and Oppression at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652
<b>32</b>	2.2.2	Using appearances to assert differences in hierarchies between the self and the 'Other' at the Cape
<b>33</b>	2.2.3	Three women at the Cape who played a role in challenging the set power structure
<b>45</b>	2.3	White Collar
<b>45</b>	2.3.1	The historical development of the ruff as a symbol of Eurocentric power
<b>49</b>	2.3.2	The restricting nature of both the ruff and the slave collar
<b>51</b>	2.3.3	The white collar used in art to subjectively subvert power relationships

<b>59</b>	2.4	The Ruff/Rough Collection
<b>63</b>	2.5	Conclusion

Chapter 3: The Shackle as the Burden of the Oppressed

<b>67</b>	3.1	Introduction
<b>71</b>	3.2	The Beginnings of Slavery at the Cape in 1658
<b>73</b>	3.3	Defiance/Resistance and Punishment
<b>75</b>	3.3.1	Absconding or ‘drosting’ and its consequences
<b>81</b>	3.3.2	In chains: Bondage as a precaution to desertion and resistance at the Cape of Good Hope, 1658
<b>85</b>	3.3.3	Punishments at the Cape
<b>87</b>	3.4	The Shackle Collection
<b>92</b>	3.4.1	Hard and Soft
<b>95</b>	3.4.2	Shackle
<b>97</b>	3.5	Conclusion

Chapter 4: Identity Construction and Deconstruction at the Cape

<b>101</b>	4.1	Introduction
<b>103</b>	4.2	Stripping Slaves of their Identity as a Power tactic
<b>104</b>	4.2.1	The re-naming of slaves
<b>109</b>	4.2.2	Female slaves and sexual abuse
<b>110</b>	4.2.3	The emergence of Afrikaans as a means of communication for the slaves: an example of colonial hybridity.
<b>113</b>	4.3	Slaves Represented in Western Art
<b>119</b>	4.3.1	Bust of a Moor by John van Nost
<b>121</b>	4.3.2	Juan de Pareja by Velázquez
<b>121</b>	4.3.3	Django Unchained by Quentin Tarantino
<b>123</b>	4.4	The Collar and the Cuff: Symbols of Power and Oppression in Popular Culture and Sexual Practice
<b>128</b>	4.5	Soft Steel Collection
<b>128</b>	4.5.1	Soft steel
<b>129</b>	4.6	Conclusion

Conclusion

<b>135</b>	5.1	Introduction
<b>135</b>	5.2	Answering the Problem Statement

- 136** 5.2.1 In which ways did the cuff and the collar illustrate power and oppression in the seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope?
- 136** 5.2.2 How would these articles (the cuff and the collar) influence the design and creation of contemporary art or jewelley on a global scale?
- 137** 5.2.3 How would these articles (the cuff and the collar) influence the design of contemporary art or jewellery in South Africa?
- 138** 5.2.4 How would these articles (the cuff and the collar) influence my designs of contemporary jewellery?
  
- 139** List of references

## List of Figures

Chapter 2: **Figure 2.1:** Charles Davidson Bell, *The Landing of Jan van Riebeeck*. (1850). Oil on canvas. South African library collection. [Online] (Bristow, 2013) Available: <http://www.news100.co.za/news/the-father-of-the-mother-city-friday-storytime-with-david-bristow-20194> [27 October 2013]

**Figure 2.2:** Original slave cuff shackles at the Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 2.3:** Bartholomeus van der Helst. *Portrait of Andries Bicker*. (1642) Oil on panel. 93 x 70.5 cm. (Rijksmuseum [Online] Available: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search/objecten?q=Andries+Bicker&p=1&ps=12&ii=3#/SK-A-146,3> [9 November 2013]

**Figure 2.4:** These false portraits circulated of the Van Riebeeck's are in fact depictions of the Vermuyden-Kettingh's. Dirck Craey, *Portrait of a man, presumably Bartholomeus Vermuyden (1616/17 – 1650)*. (1650). Oil on canvas. 74 x 57 cm. [Online] (Rijksmuseum.nl) Available: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-808> [27 October 2013]

**Figure 2.5:** These false portraits circulated of the Van Riebeeck's are in fact depictions of the Vermuyden-Kettingh's. Dirck Craey, *Portrait of a woman, presumably Catharina Kettingh (1626/27 – 1673) spouse of Bartholomeus Vermuyden*. (1650). Oil on canvas. 74 x 59 cm [Online] (Rijksmuseum.nl) Available: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/search/objecten?q=vermuyden&p=1&ps=12&ii=0#/SK-A-810,0> [27 October 2013]

**Figure 2.6:** A true representation of Jan Van Riebeeck. Anonymous. *Jan van Riebeeck (1619-77). Commander of the Cape of Good Hope and of Malacca, and Secretary of the High Government of Batavia*. (ca. 1660) Oil on canvas, 94 x 69 cm [Online] (Rijksmuseum.nl) Available: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/search/ops=12&ii=1#/SK-A-805,1>

bjecten?q=Jan+van+riebeeck&p=1&  
[27October 2013]

**Figure 2.7:** A true representation of Maria van Riebeeck, according to the Rijksmuseum archives. Anonymous. *Maria Quevellerius (1629-64), first wife of Jan van Riebeeck, or the second wife Maria Scipio (ca. 1630-95)*. (ca. 1660) Oil on canvas. 93 x 69 cm. [Online] (Rijksmuseum.nl) Available: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/search/objecten?q=maria+van+riebeeck&p=1&ps=12&ii=0#/SK-A-806,0> [28 October 2013]

**Figure 2.8:** 2.8 Pyramid graph to visualise the power structure at the Cape. Images used to represent this hierarchy include:

2.8.1 *Emblem carved above the entrance to Cape Town Castle*. Circa 1680. (Photo: Andrew Massyn 2007). [Online] Available: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:VOC\\_stone.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:VOC_stone.jpg) [11 November 2013]

2.8.2 *Naamen der Ledemaaten van Cabo de Goede Hoop d[ie] haar belijdenis gedaan, of haar Attestatien vertoont hebben*. N.d. Cape Archives VC 621 (Photo by Richard Ball) [Online] Available: <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/e1342.htm> [11 November 2013]

2.8.3 Original slave cuff shackles at the Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 2.9:** Bobbin-Lace Collar, seventeenth century. *Ornaments: Modes & Manners*. Von Boehn, M. 1970. New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc.

**Figure 2.10:** Ladies' gloves, seventeenth century. *Ornaments: Modes & Manners*. Von Boehn, M. 1970. New York: Benjamin Blom, Inc.

**Figure 2.11:** Original sketches of the details of Cape Dutch furniture. These sketches can be found on the Delaire Graff Estate, outside Stellenbosch. (Photo by Carla Kruger)

**Figure 2.12:** A representation of what Krotoa (or Eva as the Dutch called her) may have looked like. [Online] (Penguin Films, 2013) Available: <http://penguinfilms.co.za/documentary.html> [27 October

2013]

**Figure 2.13:** Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn. *Portrait of Johannes Wtenbogaert*. 1633. Oil on canvas. 130 x 103 cm. [Online]

(Rijksmuseum.nl)

<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-4885> [27 October 2013]

**Figure 2.14:** Artist unknown. *Portrait of an Old Lady in seventeenth century costume*. 1656. Oil on panel. 96 x 67 cm.

[Online] (Bowes Museum, 2006) Available:

[www.bowesmuseum.org.uk/collections/objects/category/9/11807/](http://www.bowesmuseum.org.uk/collections/objects/category/9/11807/) / [27 October 2013]

**Figure 2.15:** Abraham van den Tempel, *Portrait of a Woman*.

1646. Oil on canvas. 76 x 66 cm. [Online] (Rijksmuseum.nl)

Available: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/>

[search/objecten?q=abraham+van+den+tempel&p=1&ps=12&ii=0#/SK-C-241,0](https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/search/objecten?q=abraham+van+den+tempel&p=1&ps=12&ii=0#/SK-C-241,0) (27 October 2013)

**Figure 2.16:** A modern depiction of slaves in bondage. Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 2.17:** Heejin Hwang. *With Authority*. 2010. Steel wire, enamel, ground rock. 28 x 28 x 10 cm (Photo: Jim Escalante)

[Online] (Hwang, 2010) Available:

[http://www.heejinhwang.com/#!\\_\\_connection/photostackergallery0=14](http://www.heejinhwang.com/#!__connection/photostackergallery0=14) (27 October 2013)

**Figure 2.18:** Anika Smulovitz. *White Collar 15*. 2005. Altered men's white shirt collars size 16 1/2. (Photo: Tom McInville).

[Online] (Smulovitz, 2012) Available:

[http://anikasmulovitz.com/artwork/1142491\\_White\\_Collar\\_15.html](http://anikasmulovitz.com/artwork/1142491_White_Collar_15.html) (27 October 2013)

**Figure 2.19:** Anika Smulovitz. *White Collar 12*. 2005. Altered men's white shirt collars size 16 1/2. (Photo: Tom McInville).

[Online] (Smulovitz, 2012) Available:

[http://anikasmulovitz.com/artwork/1142491\\_White\\_Collar\\_15.html](http://anikasmulovitz.com/artwork/1142491_White_Collar_15.html)

(27 October 2013)

**Figure 2.20:** Anika Smulovitz. *White Collar 9*. 2004. Altered men's white shirt collars size 16 1/2. (Photo: Tom McInville). [Online] (Smulovitz, 2012) Available: [http://anikasmulovitz.com/artwork/1142491\\_White\\_Collar\\_15.html](http://anikasmulovitz.com/artwork/1142491_White_Collar_15.html) (27 October 2013)

**Figure 2.21:** *A replica of the Playboy Bunny Costume*. [Online] (Burlesque Baby, 2013) Available: <http://www.burlesquebaby.com.au/lingerie/playboy-bunny-costume.html> [27 October 2013]

**Figure 2.22:** Andrew Putter. *Secretly I will love you more*. 2007. Video Installation. [Online] (Artthrob, 2008) Available: <http://www.artthrob.co.za/08feb/artbio.html> [27 October 2013]

**Figure 2.23:** Carla Kruger. Sketch for *Ruff/Rough Collection*. 2013. Graphite pencil, Fabriano.

**Figure 2.24:** Carla Kruger. *For Catharina van Bengalen, on her wedding day*. 2013. Collar. Sterling silver, oxidised, Chinese Dupion silk.

**Figure 2.25:** Carla Kruger. *For Maria van Bengalen, on her wedding day*. 2013. Collar. Chinese Dupion silk, sterling silver, garnets.

**Figure 2.26:** Carla Kruger. *For Krotoa (Eva) on her wedding day*. 2013. Shoulder adornment. Copper, animal skin, plasticized back.

Chapter 3: **Figure 3.1:** A depiction of a droster plakkaat at the Cape. Slave Lodge Museum. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 3.2:** An installation view of Fred Wilson's "Easter" in *Mining the Museum*, 1992. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore. (González, 2008: 90)

**Figure 3.3:** An example of shackles and chains used at the Cape. Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 3.4:** Fred Wilson, “Metalwork 1793-1880” in *Mining the Museum*, 1992. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore. (Photo: Jeff Goldman.) (González, 2008: 86)

**Figure 3.5:** Carla Kruger. Sketch for *Hard and Soft*. 2013. Pencil on Fabriano.

**Figure 3.6:** Carla Kruger. *Hard and Soft* – the design process. 2013.

**Figure 3.7:** Carla Kruger. *Hard and Soft* – the design process. 2013.

**Figure 3.8:** Carla Kruger. *Hard and Soft*. 2013. Chinese Dupion silk, sterling silver, oxidised. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 3.9:** Carla Kruger. *Hard and Soft*. 2013. Collar necklace. Chinese Dupion silk, sterling silver, oxidised. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 3.10:** Carla Kruger. *Shackle*. Initial design process and eventual design drawings. 2013.

**Figure 3.11:** Carla Kruger. *Shackle*. Initial design process and eventual design drawings. 2013.

**Figure 3.12:** Carla Kruger. *Shackle*. Design process. 2013

**Figure 3.13:** Carla Kruger. *Shackle*. 2013. Fine silver, sterling silver, oxidised. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Chapter 4:** **Figure 4.1:** Installation of Slave names as a commemoration in the Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 4.2:** Installation of Slave names as a commemoration in the Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 4.3:** Terms peculiar to the slave history at the Cape. Church Square, Cape Town, Slave Memorial. Granite blocks. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 4.4:** *Justus Engelhardt Kuhn*. Henry Darnall III (ca. 1710). Oil on canvas. (González, 2008: 89)

**Figure 4.5:** *The Three Mulattoes of Esmeraldas* (1599) is one of the works in *Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe*, at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. [Online] (New York Times, 2012). Available: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/09/arts/design/african-presence-in-renaissance-europe-at-walters-museum.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/09/arts/design/african-presence-in-renaissance-europe-at-walters-museum.html?_r=1) [27 October 2013]

**Figure 4.6:** John van Nost. *Bust of a Moor* (c.1700) [Online] (The Royal Collection, 2012) Available: <http://46-236-36-161.servers.dedipower.net/egallery/object.asp?category=278&pagesize=80&object=1396&row=23> [28 October 2013]

**Figure 4.7:** Diego Velazquez. *Juan de Pareja* (1650). Oil on Canvas. 81 x 69 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. [Online] (MOMA, 2013) Available: <http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/437869> [28 October 2013]

**Figure 4.8:** Jamie Foxx in Quentin Tarrantino's *Django Unchained*. 2012. Film. [Online] (Staskiewicz, 2012) Available: <http://insidemovies.ew.com/2012/12/14/django-unchained-jamie-foxx-slavery/> [28 October 2013]

**Figure 4.9:** A design for sneakers promoted on the brand's Facebook page last year. [Online] (Lynch, 2012) Available: <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/jun/18/nation/la-na-nn-adidas-jeremy-scott-slavery-controversy-20120618> [29 October 2013]

**Figure 4.10:** A pair of handcuff bracelets invoke more recent

visual aesthetics of incarceration, but have ties to slavery and power, oppression and domination. [Online] (Berman, 2011)

Available:

[http://askharriete.typepad.com/ask\\_harriete/2011/10/handcuffs-as-jewelry-symbol-of-oppression-in-fashion.html](http://askharriete.typepad.com/ask_harriete/2011/10/handcuffs-as-jewelry-symbol-of-oppression-in-fashion.html) [29 October 2013]

**Figure 4.11:** Wrists and ankle cuffs in fashion jewellery. [Online] (Berman, 2011) Available:

[http://askharriete.typepad.com/ask\\_harriete/2011/10/handcuffs-as-jewelry-symbol-of-oppression-in-fashion.html](http://askharriete.typepad.com/ask_harriete/2011/10/handcuffs-as-jewelry-symbol-of-oppression-in-fashion.html) [29 October 2013]

**Figure 4.12:** A women in modern neck and handcuff restraints.

These toys are bought to enact a sexual relationship of power and oppression. [Online] (Spicesforlove, 2013) Available:

[http://spicesforlove.com/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=80&products\\_id=430&zenid=7t2u8nn828o131edgvc0vc1qg0](http://spicesforlove.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=80&products_id=430&zenid=7t2u8nn828o131edgvc0vc1qg0) [29 October 2013]

**Figure 4.13:** Another piece of sexual apparatus clearly designed to restrict movement. [Online] (Spicesforlove, 2013)

Available:[http://spicesforlove.com/index.php?](http://spicesforlove.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=80&products_id=430&zenid=7t2u8nn828o131edgvc0vc1qg0)

[main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=80&products\\_id=430&zenid=7t2u8nn828o131edgvc0vc1qg0](http://spicesforlove.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=80&products_id=430&zenid=7t2u8nn828o131edgvc0vc1qg0) [29 October 2013]

**Figure 4.14:** Carla Kruger. *Soft Steel* - Design Process. 2013.

**Figure 4.15:** Carla Kruger. *Soft Steel* - Design process. 2013. Electronic illustration.

**Figure 4.16:** Carla Kruger. *Soft Steel* - Design process. 2013.

**Figure 4.17:** Carla Kruger. *Soft Steel*. 2013. Steel binding wire, crocheted, enamel, garnet, sterling silver chain. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

**Figure 4.18:** Carla Kruger. A piece in the *Soft Steel* collection. 2013. Sterling silver, oxidised, steel binding wire, crocheted. (Photo: Carla Kruger)



## Introduction



### 1.1 Topic: Two Main Thematic Categories

The fascination I have always had with the history at the Cape began at an early stage of my life. I received my education at Jan van Riebeeck Primary and High School. Though we were taught much of the history of our school and our country, my interest in the story behind the story remained: the stories of the marginalised, of the ‘Other’<sup>1</sup>, the people who might not have been able to record their point of view in the history books we were given to study then. I discovered these stories in unconventional ways – not necessarily from printed matter like books, but from my grandparents, our domestic worker, and even my school principal. At Stellenbosch University this interest became fundamental to my work.

Through my interest in the colonial theme and my own heritage, I started questioning the role of the white population (which includes myself) in the new South African democracy and the part it played as representatives of the oppressive colonists. I started wondering what historical responsibility my name carried, and what the consequences were of Europeans who came to live in the place I now call home. As I started investigating the history of the origin of the Cape of Good Hope, I came to recognise an aesthetic style that I could identify with in my practical work. An ‘African

---

<sup>1</sup> In this thesis I will use the term ‘Other’ to define the Eurocentric practice of creating a hierarchical scale between the self, and that which is different from the self. In *The Formations of Modernity: Understanding Modern Societies* (1992) Stuart Hall describes this process as: “The figure of ‘the Other’, banished to the edge of the conceptual world and constructed as the absolute opposite, the negation, of everything which the West stood for, reappeared at the very centre of the discourse of civilization, refinement, modernity and development in the West, ‘the Other’ was the dark side – forgotten, repressed and denied; the reverse image of enlightenment and modernity (Hall & Gieben 1992: 314). I will continuously use the term in inverted commas and with a capital letter to indicate the critical context this term should be perceived in. ‘Other’ with a capital letter was first invoked by Jacques Lacan “as the very figure of ‘the strange’” (Mbembe 2001: 3).

aesthetic style<sup>2</sup>’ mixed inextricably with a European one — a simplified summary of what my aesthetic style accumulated to. Although the theme of my MA Visual Arts degree is motivated by two aesthetic and functional entities — the collar and the cuff — they inextricably contain remnants of political and historical value in the sense of slavery<sup>3</sup> and ownership.

Seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope was one of the most cosmopolitan and polyglot establishments in the world. Even today it is globally deemed as one of the most diverse cities in the world. The reason for this is that when the VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie — United East India Company) established the Cape as a refreshment station, slaves were imported from the head quarters of the company, namely Batavia (today Jakarta), in order to expand its enterprise in this land. The VOC also established working trade relationships with the local people, the Khoekhoen<sup>4</sup>, which resulted in the assimilation of these people into life at the cosmopolitan Cape.

This thesis serves as a concurrent theoretical investigation with my practical body of work. My practical work investigates the relationship between the European settler at the Cape and the ‘Other’ people they encountered. The three collections that were inspired by this interaction are based on these three groups who inhabited the Cape of Good Hope in the first years of colonisation, namely the European settlers, the slaves and the Khoekhoen. The visual rhetoric available is immense; personal stories of people living in the Cape of Good Hope at that time are in abundance. Situated between the personal stories and the general aesthetic history of the time, my body of

---

<sup>2</sup> Through many academic investigations, the very concept of ‘an African aesthetic style’ has been proved to be a myth. Although it is the aesthetics of the ‘African’ culture in Southern Africa that gave rise to this simplified term that I use in a critical way in this description of my artistic style derived from my experience growing up in Cape Town.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Slavery is a form of social oppression that is based on the use of force, which is always available to, and frequently employed by, the slave-owning class to impress its will on the slaves.’ (Ross, 1983: 1)

<sup>4</sup> For thousands of years, the Hottentots – who called themselves Khoekhoen – lived where Cape Town now stands, in a landscape abundant with useful plants, fresh water and game. From the time the Dutch colonists arrived in 1652, the Khoekhoen’s lives began changing dramatically, and within a century their culture had been virtually extinguished by the Europeans. (Putter 2009)

work visually investigates the first relations between cultures at the Cape. These relationships (the dynamics of power and oppression between European, slave and Khoekhoen) will be portrayed as a merger of various cultures – in the role of master and slave, as well as coloniser and ‘Other’.

In my theoretical investigation, as well as my practical body of work I aim to provoke a reading or perception of hybridity using the semiotic entities of the collar and the cuff to deconstruct the dynamics of power and oppression at the Cape in the seventeenth century. This is aimed at creating a shocking contrast that may instigate questions regarding the Eurocentric<sup>5</sup> practice of slavery and colonialism, as well as the relationship between dominator/master on the one hand and the oppressed/subservient/slave on the other<sup>6</sup>. Why should questions like these be raised? Colonisation and slavery form an integral part of the history at the Cape and were responsible for the Cape becoming a melting pot of cultures. Therefore, it is important to study this relationship in order to inform present-day relationships and identities. The tendency of the white coloniser to dominate those regarded by them as inferior has given rise to atrocities such as apartheid. For this reason, I have always found it interesting to investigate the first encounters and relations between cultures – the root of the situation.

Using discourses of hybridity, semiotics and dualism, I aim to critique the first encounters and relationships between the masters, slaves and Khoekhoen at the Cape. Homi Bhabha is a theorist of Indian descent who is currently the director of Humanities at Harvard University. His theories on hybridity are seminal to this thesis. He writes in his article ‘Signs Taken for Wonders’ from *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (1995):

---

<sup>5</sup> Eurocentrism will be discussed in detail later on in this study in terms of James Blaut’s book *Eight Eurocentric Historians* (2000). In short, the term constitutes the practice of proclaiming European ethnicity as superior to all other ethnicities. This term will be used throughout to discuss the agenda of the VOC at the time of settlement at the Cape, as this term was characteristic to the nature of their dominating practice and business sense at the time.

<sup>6</sup> These dualistic relationships as a hierarchic tool the VOC used at the Cape will be discussed in section 1.1.2.

Those discriminated against may be instantly recognized, but they also force a recognition of the immediacy and articulacy of authority — a disturbing effect that is familiar in the repeated hesitancy afflicting the colonial discourse when it contemplates its discriminated subjects: the *inscrutability* of the Chinese, the *unspeakable* rites of the Indians, the *indescribable* habits of the Hottentots. It is not that the voice of authority is at a loss of words. It is rather, that the colonial discourse has reached that point when, faced with the hybridity of its objects, the *presence* of power is revealed as something other than what its rules of recognition assert. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 35).

In this article Bhabha investigates mimicry as a tool of ‘Othering’, though I am interested in his theories about the ‘hybrid’ effect this process of ‘Othering’ produces.

If the effect of colonial power is seen to be the *production* of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of native traditions, then an important change of perspective occurs. It reveals the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses on authority and enables a form of subversion, founded on that uncertainty, that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 35).

If Bhabha suggests that this (hybridised) consequence of colonial power and discourse is indeed a platform for contestation, it is this contestation I wish to uncover in my research and practical work. This effect of hybridisation as a product of colonialist power structures that Bhabha discusses in the quote above, was brought into effect by several discourses. These discourses (including ‘Othering’ as its main component) included a carefully constructed network of signs and signifiers, to convey meaning between the master, slave and Khoekhoen, in order for the VOC to establish this power structure at the Cape. If Bhabha suggests that this hybrid effect brought on by this process can be used as grounds to call into question these very processes and discourses of Eurocentric practice, then these signs and signifiers would be used to self-reflexively challenge the original context. This is what I aim to prove in this theoretical investigation and concurrently in my practical work.

### 1.1.1 The collar and the cuff as semiotic entities at the Cape

As a visual artist researching the history of colonisation and slavery at the Cape, I was intrigued by the visual illustrations of this history. I was especially interested in the way the different ‘costumes’<sup>7</sup> of the respective characters in the colonisation ‘story’ were depicted. Visual ‘signifiers’ of certain power relationships at the Cape that reoccurred throughout my research were the cuff and the collar in many different forms and functions.

In my opinion, these different articles of clothing, adornment and other functional objects<sup>8</sup> were meant to be worn on the body to restrict and constrain movement and action. Yet these articles largely portrayed the story of European settlement at the Cape. The potential these visual symbols contained to separate binary<sup>9</sup> oppositions and demarcate hierarchies is, in my view, infinite. The Europeans who arrived in their white collars with the aim to dominate; the Khoekhoen who stood on the shores in their elaborate body adornment and watched the outsiders take over their land and the steel-shackled slaves who were imported to become the machine that would build the refreshment station at the Cape. Their signifiers<sup>10</sup> might have placed the Europeans, slaves and Khoekhoen in different categories or status groups, but these three history lines<sup>11</sup> combined shaped the Cape into the multicultural city it is today (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 45). For these reasons, I deemed it important to investigate these first role-players and their relationships when investigating power structures in a colony such as the Cape of Good Hope.

---

<sup>7</sup> I use this word in inverted commas because these ‘costumes’ were used by the Eurocentric practices of the VOC at the Cape to categorise the different status groups into dualistic relationships (this concept will be elucidated in terms of Val Plumwood’s theory later in section 1.1.2).

<sup>8</sup> The cuff and the collar

<sup>9</sup> Binary oppositions and dualistic relationships as theoretical terms will be introduced in section 1.1.2 below.

<sup>10</sup> A ‘signifier’ is a linguistic term for the physical form of a sign or symbol as distinct from its meaning. (The New Oxford American Dictionary 2010. Sv. ‘signifier’) I will use this definition in this study when I discuss semiotics and signs.

<sup>11</sup> These three history lines constitute the Europeans, Khoekhoen and slaves from various parts of the world

In *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (1995) Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (as editors) write an introduction to the chapter concerning 'Representation and Resistance'. They describe how signs and representation were used in the Eurocentric agenda of colonialist practices.

Representation and resistance are very broad arenas within which much of the drama of colonialist relations and post-colonial examination and subversion of those relations has taken place. In both conquest and colonisation, texts and textuality played a major part. European texts – anthropologies, histories, fiction, captured the non-European subject within European frameworks which read his or her alterity as terror or lack. Within the complex relations of colonialism these representations were re-projected to the colonised – through formal education or general colonialist cultural relations – as authoritative pictures of themselves. Concomitantly representations of Europe and Europeans within the textual archive were situated as normative. Such texts – the representation of Europe to itself, and the representation of others to Europe – were not accounts of different peoples and societies, but a projection of European fears and desires masquerading as scientific/'objective' knowledges. (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 85).

In this study, I will be using these various texts (anthropologies, histories and fiction) as a platform for contestation and subversion of the practice of domination and colonisation at the Cape; exactly as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin suggests (as a post-colonial examination) in the quote above. These practices of representation and documentation using signs and symbols in Eurocentric discourse to justify their presence in the colonial state will be discussed in terms of the master-slave relationship at the Cape of Good Hope in the seventeenth century in this study.

#### 1.1.2 Power and oppression: The relationship between master and slave

I will proceed with a brief background of the beginnings of colonisation and slavery at the Cape. This will illustrate the ways in which the cuff and the collar represented power and oppression at the time of colonisation. This investigation will include the reasons why slavery was brought to the Cape, a few examples of mixed-race marriages, slave resistance, punishment and various oppression techniques applied by the Europeans. The relationship the slaves had with the Khoekhoen will also be included in this investigation. This provides the background for my analysis of the relationship between

master and slave, as signified by the cuff and the collar and consequently power and oppression at the Cape.

The history of colonialism and especially the institution of slavery has mostly been characterised by violence. Dr Robert Ross in *Cape of torments: Slavery and resistance in South Africa* (1983) writes how “a mild slave regime is impossible and everything touched by slavery is brutalized.” (Ross 1983: 1). The colonisation and settlement at the Cape was no different. However, the only form of resistance the slaves managed was the occasional arson and murder, but mostly desertion<sup>12</sup>. According to Ross (1983: 3), no large-scale rebellion had been recorded, most likely because the intricate organisation of the Eurocentric system of domination made this almost impossible. With visual representation of dominant identities, together with strict regulations and laws, the VOC kept control of their slave trade and labour for their entire rule at the Cape.

In this research, I will use my own practical work as representation of the relationship between master and slave. My practical body of work will encompass an amalgamation of the visual symbols of this relationship (between master and slave), which aims to provoke questions regarding the role this crucial occurrence in history played in the genesis of atrocities such as apartheid. Using the cuff and the collar as symbols to investigate the dualistic relationship between master/slave and European/‘Other’ in this study will form the basis of this study and concurrently the influence of my practical work. Val Plumwood describes such dualistic relationships and their role as a tool and a characteristic in propagating the colonialist agenda in her chapter “Dualism: the logic of colonisation” in her book *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993):

A dualism, I have argued, results from a certain kind of denied dependency on a subordinated other. This relationship of denied dependency determines a certain kind of logical structure, in which the denial and the relation of domination/subordination shape the identity of both the relata. I use examples from a number of forms of oppression, especially gender, race and colonisation, to show what this structure is, and discuss its logical formulation. By means of

---

<sup>12</sup> “The lack of rebellions does not mean, of course, that the slaves acquiesced in their slavery. They expressed their discontent in many ways, but above all by deserting.” (Ross 1983: 5)

dualism, the colonised are appropriated, incorporated, into the selfhood and culture of the master, which forms their identity. The dominant conception of the human/ nature relation in the west has features corresponding to this logical structure. Because of this structure, escape from dualised relationship and dualised identity represents a particularly difficult problem, involving a sort of logical maze. (Plumwood 1993: 42).

These theories of Plumwood once again links with theories of 'Othering', representation, hybridisation and appropriation<sup>13</sup> and will be used and investigated in this study as tools to deconstruct the master/slave relationship.



## 1.2 Problem Statement

This study researches the following primary problem:

In which ways did the cuff and the collar illustrate power and oppression in the seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope?

The scope of this study focuses on the relationship of the Europeans with slaves from different parts of the world in the seventeenth century at the Cape. This relationship will be investigated in terms of two symbols: the collar and the cuff. I aim to prove that these objects of function or adornment could be seen as symbols of the dynamics between master and slave, and thus the struggle for power at the Cape. In this thesis I will also investigate the possibility of my own visual body of work to present possible new identities by revealing the hybridising effect of the power-play between cultures during colonisation and slavery at the Cape. My practical work presents these possible new semiotic solutions in the form or nuance of the collar and the cuff.

A number of secondary problem statements can be deduced from the primary

---

<sup>13</sup> "Appropriation as a critical tool in contemporary art practice will be discussed later in this study in terms of Fred Wilson's work. The term is defined as 'the action of taking something for one's own use, typically without the owner's permission (...) often derogatory; the artistic practice or technique of reworking images from well known paintings, photographs, etc., in one's own work.' (*The New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2010. Sv. 'appropriation')

statement above:

- How would these articles (the cuff and the collar) influence the design and creation of contemporary art or jewellery on a global scale?
- How would these articles (the cuff and the collar) influence the design and creation of contemporary art or jewellery in South Africa?
- How do these articles (the cuff and the collar) influence my designs and creation of contemporary jewellery?

The collar and the cuff as elements of adornment and functional artefacts play an important role in the history of the Cape. The elite Dutch society and the leaders of the VOC used to wear white ruffs or lace cuffs around the neck and arms<sup>14</sup> to demonstrate wealth, power and stature<sup>15</sup>. The slaves that were imported from around the world were often put in cuffs and chains, to keep them from running away (Schoeman 2007: 69). Most of the time the slaves at the Cape were largely well cared for, substantial payment has been made to acquire them. Yet, it is this initial bondage and punishment that I am interested in when researching naturalising<sup>16</sup> methods of Eurocentric practices. My visual, and thus also theoretical research, encompass the aesthetics of the slave and the master — both donning collars and cuffs on occasion. It also focuses on the semiotic meaning of each in the relationship of power and oppression. In both the case of the ruff and the slave shackle it may be interesting to note that all of these items restricted movement — the objects of restriction were not limited to slave shackles; the European ruff was also a restrictive adornment. So, if these objects were restricting, why would they be worn? One could argue that this resulted from the fact that semiotics (perhaps not as such, but looking back on this history one can identify the contemporary practice of applying semiotic reading as it was used in the seventeenth

---

<sup>14</sup> This phenomenon can be verified in many European history paintings by artists such as Charles Bell in *The Landing of Jan van Riebeeck* (1850) [Figure 2.1], as well as the representations of the Van Riebeecks (also to be found in Chapter 2).

<sup>15</sup> Scribner, a blogger whose work I will discuss in section 2.3.1, writes: “The rigidity of the ruff thus ensured that the wearer projected a dignified pose that, due to hindered movement, suggested a life of leisure and attendance to.” (Scribner 2008)

<sup>16</sup> This term will be explained in section 1.3.

century Cape) and visual identity construction were regarded as extremely important by the first and second generation European settlers at the Cape. It was these semiotic tools that helped them naturalise their Eurocentric narrative. These narratives and semiotic devices will be investigated in depth in order to provide the necessary tools by means of which my practical work in this thesis will be analysed.



### 1.3 Theoretical Framework

In this study, I searched for various methods to deconstruct and disrupt 'accepted' and justified<sup>17</sup> notions of power structures at the Cape as well as the construction of history that accompanies the power phenomenon, domination and consequently marginalisation with regards to literacy, representation and 'Othering'. I found many artists and theorists who work with the concept of hybridisation and fictionalisation<sup>18</sup> as an appropriate tool to subjectively critique a relationship of power and the marginalisation or oppression of the 'Other' that naturally accompanies power. This marginalisation of the 'Other', is then uncovered in the fictional/hybrid account, in a self-reflexive<sup>19</sup> way that causes the viewer or reader to think twice about what they have accepted as the undisputed truth until now. Homi Bhabha's theories regarding 'Othering' and 'hybridity', as introduced earlier, will be explored in this study.

The dualistic relationships at the Cape (master/slave; self/'Other' and civilised/primitive) will be investigated in terms of Val Plumwood's writings on "Dualism as the Logic of Colonisation" in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993). Her

<sup>17</sup> By the Eurocentric doctrine as used by the VOC at the Cape to maintain control over the slaves and the Khoekhoen.

<sup>18</sup> Fictionalisation is described in *The New Oxford American Dictionary* as the practice of inventing or fabrication of imaginary events (*The New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2010. Sv. 'fictionalisation'). It is used by many artists (such as Andrew Putter) and literary writers (such as Dalene Mathee's *Pieterella van die Kaap* [2000]) to contest the construction of history.

<sup>19</sup> 'Self-reflexive' is defined as 'containing a reflection or image of itself; self-referential' (*The New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2010. Sv. 'self-reflexive')

theories on dualism in the master/slave relationship is seminal to this investigation.

A dualism is more than a relation of dichotomy, difference, or nonidentity, and more than a simple hierarchical relationship. In dualistic construction, as in hierarchy, the qualities (actual or supposed), the culture, the values and the areas of life associated with the dualised other are systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior. Hierarchies, however, can be seen as open to change, as contingent and shifting. But once the process of domination forms culture and constructs identity, the inferiorised group (unless it can marshal cultural resources for resistance) must internalise this inferiorisation in its identity and collude in this low valuation, honouring the values of the centre, which form the dominant social values. (Plumwood 1993: 47).

In terms of the theory behind the establishment of a dominating power structure<sup>20</sup>, Tony Fluxman provides adequate insight into one of the oldest questions in political theory, namely:

[H]ow [are] those in power able to maintain their rule over those they oppress? Many important thinkers have argued that oppressors cannot rule by force alone. ... Theorists such as Russel Hardin, Joseph Heath and Michael Rosen have tried to defend the idea that oppression can be maintained by force alone by challenging the assumption that if the oppressed are enlightened about their condition, they can quite easily and straightforwardly act as a coherent political force against their oppressors and so overthrow them. This view however assumes that the oppressed can simply unite in opposition to their oppressors. It ignores the fact that the oppressed face a coordination problem amongst themselves. (Fluxman 2004: 1).

According to Fluxman slavery as a practice does not encourage the formation of coordination, or any other sense of group or community under slaves. Slaves do not always originate from the same community, culture or language. The dominating party (or masters in this case) controls this phenomenon in just such a way that the slaves would not unite in revolt.

---

<sup>20</sup> Michel Foucault's theory about power structure was investigated extensively for the purpose of this study, but was found to be of lesser relevance and value in this particular context. His postmodern approach to power relations excludes slavery as such a relationship (Bălan 2010). In the context of the pre-modern society at the Cape, the master/slave relationship is indeed one of power (domination) and oppression (subserviency). Thus Foucault's theories are not discussed in this study.

Naturalisation, representation and stereotyping as Eurocentric tools will be discussed in terms of how it was utilised by the Europeans – together with their symbols of power (the collar and the cuff) – to maintain control at the Cape. Jan Nederveen Pieterse has an interesting view on these three tools (naturalisation, representation and stereotyping) and how Europe exploited it in the colonial era. His theories will be discussed and used to deconstruct the Eurocentric practice of creating dualistic relationships in order to maintain a dominating power position at the Cape. He describes how ethnology served the interest of the colonial administrators as a tool of reiterating their colonialist claims. This Western hegemony<sup>21</sup> manifested itself in art and literature, and scientific observation and fiction were “interwoven as in Orientalism” (Pieterse 1995: 224). He explains how we now look at the “wider politics of intercultural representation, exploring the relations between representations of ‘Otherness’ and the dynamics of power.” In addition Pieterse (1995: 224) writes that the assessment of what representation means in terms of power and hierarchy depends on how representation is analysed in the first place.

Achille Mbembe, one of the most seminal writers on postcolonial colonial studies, writes in *On The Postcolony* (2001) about the different stages in the colonial process, which involved different levels of violence to ‘naturalise’ the law and the new social system. The parallel he draws in his writing between representation and violence is seminal to this investigation. The first was what he calls ‘founding violence’, and this is the violence that accompanies conquest. He then speaks of a second sort of violence that was produced before and after, and as an integrated part of the conquest. This had to do with legitimation. “Its function was, as Derrida speaks of a somewhat different issue to provide self-interpreting language and models for the colonial order, to give this order meaning, to justify its necessity and universalising mission – in short, to help produce an imaginary capacity converting the founding violence into authorising authority.” (Mbembe 2001: 25) The third term of violence he speaks of was enforced to guarantee the colonial authority’s maintenance, growth and permanence. He explains

---

<sup>21</sup> ‘Hegemony’ is defined as leadership or dominance, especially by one country or social group over others. (*The New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2010. Sv. ‘hegemony’)

that this kind of violence had a corroborative and ‘reiterating’ function:

“It recurred again and again in the most banal and ordinary situations. It then crystallized, through a gradual accumulation of numerous acts and rituals – in short, played so important a role in everyday life that it ended up constituting the central cultural imaginary that the state shared with society.” (Mbembe 2001: 25).

The tool which brings all these theories (hybridisation, ‘Othering’, dualism and naturalisation as Eurocentric tools and characteristics) is semiotics. Kate McGowan’s article “Structuralism and Semiotics” in *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory* (2006) explains structuralism<sup>22</sup>, as a predecessor to semiotic theory:

The idea is that the world without structures is meaningless – a random and chaotic continuum of possibilities. What structures do is to organise that continuum, to organise it according to a certain set of principles, which enable us to make sense of it. In this way, structures make the world tangible to us, conceptually real, and hence meaningful. Once discovered, so the theory goes, structures show us how meanings come about, why things seem to be just the way they are and, by implication, what might lead us to contest them. (Malpas & Wake 2006: 4).

These structures that create meaning (that are described by McGowan above) are what will be demarcated in this study in the context of colonialism and slavery at the Cape. This will provide the platform for contestation in the same way Homi Bhabha’s hybrid theory and Val Plumwood’s dualistic theory provides such a platform. McGowan also provides detailed accounts, examples and applications of semiotic theory in visual and linguistic cultural studies. A brief explanation follows below:

Semiotics is concerned with signs. As an academic discipline, semiotics is primarily concerned with the life of signs – from their production as an effect of signifying systems, right through to the particular implications of the significations they can be said to carry within the cultural systems in which they operate. (Malpas & Wake 2006: 10).

In this study I will investigate the role of the primary visual signs (of the dualistic relationship of master and slave) and their interrelation with each other, as well as secondary meanings<sup>23</sup> deduced from this process of meaning creation.

---

<sup>22</sup> See also Ferdinand de Saussure’s series of lectures published in *Course in General Linguistics* (1974).

The fourth chapter of this study will investigate tools of identity construction at the Cape. The quote by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin below explains how the body (read as a system of signs) signifies and portrays the process of 'Othering' in colonialist practices:

The 'difference' of the post-colonial subject by which s/he can be 'othered' is felt most directly and immediately in the way in which the superficial differences of the body and voice (skin colour, eye shape, hair texture, body shape, language, dialect or accent) are read as indelible signs of the 'natural' inferiority of their possessors. As Fanon noted many years ago, this is the inescapable 'fact' of blackness, a 'fact' which forces on 'negro' people a heightened level of bodily self-consciousness, since it is the body which is the inescapable, visible sign of their oppression and denigration. In a more general way the 'fact' of the body is a central feature of the postcolonial, standing as it does metonymically for all the 'visible' signs of difference, and their varied forms of cultural and social inscription, forms often either undervalued, overdetermined or even totally invisible to the dominant colonial discourse. Yet, paradoxically the resulting self-consciousness, as Fanon perceived, can drive the very opposition which can undo this stereotyping (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 321).

The body as a signifying field to project and reflect the discourses of the Eurocentric narrative will also be discussed in Chapter 4 in terms of seminal theorist Judith Butler's work. A brief introductory quote on Butler's work about the body, identity and discourse follows below:

This "body" often appears to be a passive medium that is signified by an inscription from a cultural source figured as "external" to that body. Any theory of the cultural constructed body, however, ought to question "the body" as a construct of suspect generality when it is figured as passive and prior to discourse (Butler 1990: 233).

Butler's theory of the body as an essential tool in constructing dualisms and as such 'Othering' and constructing identity is important to this investigation when semiotically deconstructing the 'Self' body of the European and the 'Other' body of the slave or Khoekhoen (at the Cape) as they were adorned with the collar and the cuff.

---

<sup>23</sup> If the master had been established as 'better' than the slave/'Other' in the dualistic relationship of power at the Cape, then it can be said (and the Europeans did use these secondary dualistic relationships in their colonialist claim) that the slave/'Other' is less civilised; less cultured (more nature); less rational (more animal) and less reasonable (more emotional). These theories are delineated in Plumwood (1993: 43).



#### 1.4 Research Methodology

My own practical work is central to this theoretical investigation, and will be the main source of my research. This investigative research thoroughly studies the relationship of power and oppression visually portrayed between slave and master at the Cape of Good Hope in the seventeenth century.

My study is based on qualitative research, whereby data will be explored in the form of individual interpretations of events, using participant observation and in-depth visual research into the relationship between master and slave. By using certain tools I will semiotically investigate the visual narratives and devices the Eurocentric powers at the Cape utilised to enforce order and power.

During such an investigation, one has to be heedful not to become just another re-teller of history, and especially not to give a one-dimensional portrayal of the facts. Of course such a study would almost certainly be mostly subjective, as most visual surveys are. For this reason, I will strive to make this study, especially my practical work, a factual endeavour. The facts will be procured from historical sources (books by historical writers who have managed to find marginalised details about the oppressed) and personal stories found in these sources. The aim is to base this entire study on factual information and the stories of real people.



#### 1.5 Literature Review

History books by Karel Schoeman proved to be highly informative sources for my study. They are well documented, and seem to take on a sympathetic tone for the plight of the slaves. *Armosyn van die Kaap: Die Wêreld van 'n Slavin, 1652-1733* (2001); *Early Slavery at the Cape Of Good Hope 1652-1717* (2007); *Seven Khoi Lives: Cape Biographies of the Seventeenth Century* (2009) were all seminal to this thesis. Krotoa's

story in Chapter 2 is mainly based on research by Karel Schoeman. In addition, I also included opposing views from Patric Tariq Mellet's *Drawing the Longbow in the VOC Fort: Krotoa of the Goringhaicona and Cochoqua (1642-674)* (2009), which is a detailed online article on Krotoa's life at the Cape. A personal interview with South African artist Andrew Putter in 2011 about his work on *Secretly I will love you more* provided insightful data for this research.

Homi Bhabha writes about his theories on 'Othering' and the hybrid effect of colonialism in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (1995) edited by Bill Ashcroft, Garreth Griffiths and Helen Tiffen. The editors' notes in the introductions to many of the chapters also provide valuable insight. Val Plumwood writes about dualistic relationships in *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993). These theories are important in this study when I investigate the master/slave relationship as a Eurocentric power structure at the Cape. Kate McGowan provides an insightful explanation of the language of signs in "Structuralism and Semiotics" published in *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory* (2006) edited by Simon Malpas and Paul Wake. Judith Butler's book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) supplies descriptive accounts of the body as a signifier and identity construction tool. These theories concerning signs, symbols and the creation of meaning will be seminal in my investigation and deconstruction of power structures at the Cape in the middle of the seventeenth century.

Tony Fluxman provided a detailed description of theories of oppression and ideology in *Coordination, Ideology and Oppression* (2004). The content of Dr. Robert Ross creates an investigative account of the few cases of resistance recorded at the Cape in *Cape of torments: Slavery and Resistance in South Africa* (1983) Hermann Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga edited *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika* (2007), which provided many interesting details about the first settlement at the Cape, while Leonard Thompson's *A History of South Africa* (2006) contained interesting accounts of the master-slave relationship.

Professor Hans Heese from the Stellenbosch Friends of the Museum held a talk on

slavery which I attended on 20 May 2013 in Stellenbosch. His book *Groep sonder grense* (2005) was insightful into the various mixed-race marriages at the Cape and their consequences on the genealogy of South Africans.



## 1.6 Historical Overview

Investigating (visual) history as a cultural study in the practice of demystification (the action of removing mystery or myth through extensive critique) is how Simon During describes Cornel West's essay 'Decline of the West' from *The Cultural Studies Reader* (During 1993: 203):

Cornel West's essay can be read as a manifesto for intellectuals who work on behalf of the 'culture of difference'. It is aimed at helping us avoid the reductive ways of thinking that endanger such work – that is, it helps us to avoid those 'one-factor' analyses' which 'lose touch' with the complexities of thought and action in the world, and which, in their simplifications, provide props for racism, sexism and monoculturalism. To escape such simplifications and to begin to provide an ethics for cultural workers, West turns to history. He presents a brief 'genealogy' of the decline of Eurocentrism and white suprematism – 'genealogy' being a word he borrows from Michel Foucault to refer to a history that supports current political practice. He argues that the task of 'demystification' (or ideology-critique) can only be carried out by those whose confidence and sense of the contemporary cultural-political structures is supported by a knowledge of Eurocentrism's history. Here cultural studies and history become indivisible.

West argued here that an investigation is necessary into the decline of Eurocentrism in order to uncover the 'culture of difference' or multiculturalism. In South Africa this means an embrace of influences from other cultures that migrated to the Cape in the colonial era, whether it was by choice or by force, as well as an extensive critique of the Eurocentric practices of the seventeenth century. As this thesis focuses on the first few years of colonisation and slavery at the Cape, I am of the opinion that it is historically situated in the concept West describes above.



## 1.7 Outline of Chapters

This study consists of four chapters (including this introductory chapter); and a fifth concluding chapter. Each chapter in this thesis analyses a component of my practical body of work. This guides my research and ultimately provides the answer(s) to the problem statement in this study.

In Chapter 2, “The White Collar as part of the Power Uniform” the white collar is investigated as an object of power. This chapter visually and historically researches the ruff as a white collar. Its presence in art will be explored to ascertain in which way(s) other artists have used this ‘powerful’ item to subvert the power/oppression relationship. This chapter also discusses the ruff as inspiration to the (later) simplified collar as part of the business power suit by investigating the work of contemporary jewellery artists. This visual object is investigated historically and projected onto the platform of the pre-slavery Cape society, where the VOC’s multiracial nature became apparent in many mixed race unions. The ruff, which was seen as a symbol of wealth and power in the seventeenth century, played out its role perfectly in the Eurocentric regime at the Cape. This chapter also tells the stories of three women who challenged the accepted powers structure at the Cape, as case studies of the multiracial nature of the VOC.

These personal stories, together with the ruff as a power symbol was used as inspiration for my contemporary jewellery series, *The Ruff/Rough Collection*. This series reinterprets the period of history at the Cape before slavery became an institution. In my work I visually amalgamate two symbols of power and oppression – the silk ruff, and the steel shackle. Hereby I subjectively try to subvert the power relationship at the Cape that was present in those days, the same hegemony that created the precedent for nearly every power relationship since colonisation, thus for the past 350 years.

Chapter 3, “The Shackle as the Burden of the Oppressed” focuses on the physical

enforcements of power at the Cape in the seventeenth century. This chapter also discusses punishment and government as well as the few cases of resistance recorded at the Cape. I will discuss the work of Fred Wilson (an artist who deals with the marginalisation of American slaves in his work) as an example of juxtaposition in art that comments on marginalisation and history construction, another form of power relations. In my practical work, *The Shackle Collection*, I used these physical constraints of bondage in a hybridised symbolic manner, to argue that boundaries of power can be deconstructed in this way.

Chapter 4, “Identity Construction and Deconstruction at the Cape: The Mental Cuff and Collar” discusses the various tools the Europeans used to demarcate different roles and identities at the Cape. It will explore visual implementation and naturalisation of the institution of slavery and mastery through identity construction. This chapter will also investigate the manner in which slaves have been represented in art, and how this might have had an effect on identity construction processes.

The final chapter concludes this study by drawing relevant deductions from my research. Chapter 5 will establish the theories investigated throughout this study as concurrent to my practical work and will provide answers to the research problem outlined in this introduction to the study.



Figure 2.1: Charles Davidson Bell,  
*The Landing of Jan van Riebeeck*. (1850).  
Oil on canvas.  
South African library collection.  
(Bristow 2013 [Online])

## Chapter 2: The White Collar as Part of the Power Uniform



### 2.1 Introduction

The local people who were living at the Cape at the time of colonisation, the Khoekhoen, “wore animal skins” and other material of natural colour (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 51). They consequently blended in with the wild, which resulted in them being better hunters. It was also the more practical choice in the rural Cape of Good Hope before April 1652.

According to sources<sup>24</sup> available it was rather important for the Dutch to maintain appearances during the colonisation of the Cape. They dressed in a manner that was both practical, but above all, exerted a certain amount of power. What better way to express the latter by wearing a set of white cuffs and a collar in the middle of the wild? This form of identity construction was limited to an audience of the Khoekhoen and the lower ranks of the Company who came with Van Riebeeck on the ship at the time. This interaction, which shows Jan van Riebeeck’s arrival at the Cape, is depicted by Charles Bell in Figure 2.1.

My own deduction from my research of the first meeting of the Dutch at the Cape is that the implication of these symbols (the cuff and the collar) might not have been understood initially by the audience it was intended for (the Khoekhoen). The Khoekhoen at the Cape would have had contact with the Portuguese<sup>25</sup> before the Dutch arrived and they must have sensed danger at the appearance of these foreigners. The Khoekhoen’s impression of these ‘aliens’ might have been one of

---

<sup>24</sup> As discussed in Section 2.2.1, according to Jan van Riebeeck’s diary entries, the employees of the VOC had to be emancipated in order for them to afford “finer” clothing more befitting of masters and mistresses which they would soon become as the slaves arrived. (Schoeman 2001: 35)

<sup>25</sup> See also Vasco da Gama’s (the Portuguese) historic 1498 voyage around the Cape of Good Hope “memorialised in *Os Lusíadas*” an epic poem by *Luís de Camões* that presents the perspective of the Portuguese (Sadlier 1998: 51).

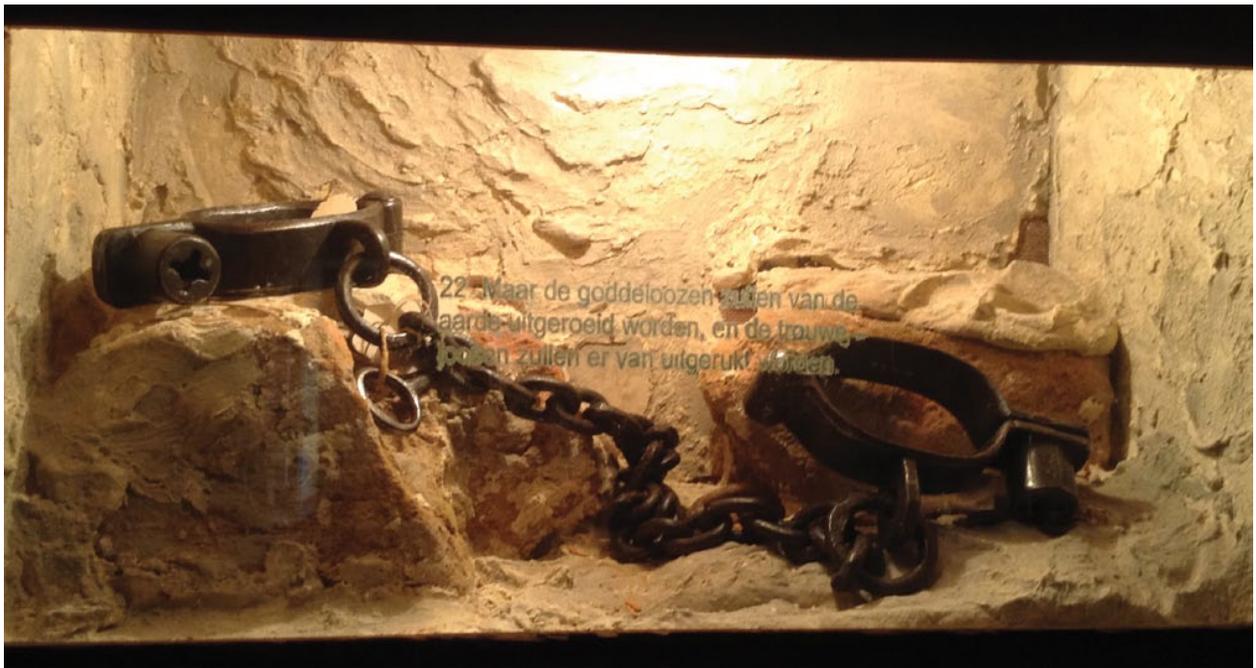


Figure 2.2: Original slave cuff shackles at the Slave Lodge Museum,  
Cape Town  
(Photo: Carla Kruger)

wonder or fear. One does not know much of their first impressions, as the thoughts of the Khoekhoen have not been as rigorously recorded as those of the Europeans at the Cape. They might have considered the Europeans to be impractical, walking about the Bay in so much clothing. They might have wondered how the Europeans kept their white adornments so clean. However, once the Dutch saw they could not achieve a successful working relationship with the Khoekhoen during the time of settlement at the Cape, a certain amount of violence followed. The degree of violence and power most likely became synonymous with the dress of the Europeans as viewed by the Khoekhoen.

After 1658, when the first shipment of slaves arrived, it was seemingly important for the Europeans to show the slaves their place in society and in the power structure at the Cape. They were dressed in coarse fabrics<sup>26</sup>, a rudimentary way to heed against the cold at the Cape. They were often put in shackles and collars to keep them from escaping. The first occurrences of this will be discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis. An example of slave restraint cuffs is shown in Figure 2.2.

Visual naturalisation and stereotyping – in its capacity as discourse to segregate the self from the ‘Other’ has helped many imperialist countries dominate the indigenous peoples and manage their assets. In this case, the slaves and the Khoekhoen were at the receiving end. Through the same technique, the Dutch managed to maintain control at the Cape. It is the symbol of power, the white collar, in its narrative of domination naturalisation that will be investigated in this chapter. The manner in which the Europeans used the white collar as a symbol of power during the first years of colonisation at the Cape will be described, as well as the various Eurocentric tools they used to achieve this effect. Pieterse critiques these tools (naturalisation and stereotyping) of domination and oppression in the introduction to his book *White on Black* (1992):

Social representation arise out of a multiplicity of historical contexts and configurations, and therefore cannot be reduced to a few simple schemas. If one were to try to discern an underlying structure – for instance, ‘nature and culture’ – in the variety of images, the structure itself would turn out to be made up of

---

<sup>26</sup> (Schoeman 2007: 75)



Figure 2.3: Bartholomeus van der Helst.

*Portrait of Andries Bicker.* (1642)

Oil on panel. 93 x 70.5 cm

(Rijksmuseum [Online]).

many historical constituents, the meaning of which has been changing over time. For these reasons, in order to dispel the 'enchantment' of stereotypes, I emphasize in this study not their durability but their changeability, the historical relativity of social representations, and the fact that images of blacks, like ideologies of 'race', are social constructions. This book is a study of images and power, an enquiry into the social rhetoric of images. It is concerned with such questions as, how are relations of dominance constructed and reproduced in popular culture, how are they normalised and routinized in word and image? (Pieterse 1992: 12)

In the excerpt above Pieterse explains the role of visual naturalisation and stereotyping through images in the imperialistic and colonialist agendas (of the VOC at the Cape). These theories could be applied to the context of the Cape in the seventeenth century, and Pieterse suggests that in such an investigation as this study, one might use the theory of structuralism and semiotics<sup>27</sup> to undermine these falsely naturalised stereotypes.



## 2.2 Before Slavery became an Institution at the Cape

The VOC was a highly profitable company who reigned over most of the maritime trade during the Golden Age. The Cape of Good Hope was meant to be established as a refreshment station to aid the VOC's trade with the East (Schoeman 2007: 11). At the beginning it was just that, but it evolved into something much more, and in later years became one of the most sought-after colonies in the world. The most important factor that brought about this radical change — from mere refreshment station to the more profitable colony it became — was slave labour. The hard work of the slaves at the Cape turned the land into something more — something that would be coveted by the opposition of the VOC, namely the British and the Portuguese. It can be attributed to the European's relationship with the Khoekhoen, the slaves imported from all over the world, as well as the multi-racial nature of the VOC's dealings in general, that the Cape was one of the most cosmopolitan and polyglot places in the world at that time.

---

<sup>27</sup> McGowan explains this practice in *Structuralism and Semiotics* (Malpas & Wake 2006: 4) as mentioned in section 1.3.



Figure 2.4: These false portraits circulated of the Van Riebeeck's are in fact depictions of the Vermuyden-Kettingh's.

Dirck Craey,

*Portrait of a man, presumably Bartholomeus Vermuyden (1616/17 – 1650).* (1650).

Oil on canvas. 74 x 57 cm

(rijksmuseum.nl [Online]).



Figure 2.5: These false portraits circulated of the Van Riebeeck's are in fact depictions of the Vermuyden-Kettingh's.

Dirck Craey,

*Portrait of a woman, presumably Catharina Kettingh (1626/27 – 1673) spouse of Bartholomeus Vermuyden.* (1650).

Oil on canvas. 74 x 59 cm

(rijksmuseum.nl [Online]).

### 2.2.1 A Brief Introduction to the Dynamics of Power and Oppression at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652

This thesis focuses on the first ten years at the Cape. It deals with, amongst others, the establishment of the refreshment station and the eventual institution of slavery, as well as the relationship of the slaves and their masters, and the slaves and their other enemies, namely the Khoekhoen. By using my art practice as an investigation and subjective representation of these relationships, I aim to illustrate the impact of these first relationships on the the history of this country over more than 350 years.

The board of directors of the VOC was called the Gentlemen XVII. They were the decision-makers and it was their judgements that would eventually form the society at the Cape. These European leaders gathered in a boardroom in Batavia and dictated their needs to the Commander at the Cape, who was Jan van Riebeeck at the time (Schoeman 2007: 11). These European leaders wore ruffs and other forms of white collars around their necks as a symbol of power and wealth. This phenomenon can be seen in figure 2.3<sup>28</sup> with the depiction of Andries Bicker. Bicker was an Administrator of the VOC, a member of the Gentlemen XVII and his family was one of the most influential and powerful families in the Netherlands at the time (Blok & Molhuysen 2008). I will use the white collar as a metaphor for Eurocentric ideology (in this research as well as in my practical work) and create several comparisons in order to demarcate this symbology in this chapter.

Karel Schoeman gives a clear portrayal of life at the Cape in those early years. His descriptions are based on the personal diary and muster roll of Commander Van Riebeeck, as well as other official documents from the Western Cape Archives. His books are rich in detail: he records personal stories and even manages, despite their poorly documented histories, to unearth some bare details about the slaves themselves.

Figure 2.4 and 2.5 are the well-known depictions of Jan van Riebeeck, the Commander of the Cape, and his wife, Maria. Jan and Maria van Riebeeck were the original masters

---

<sup>28</sup> And also in the portrait of Jan van Riebeeck in figure 2.6.in section 1.3.



Figure 2.6: A true representation of Jan Van Riebeeck.

Anonymous.

*Jan van Riebeeck (1619-77). Commander of the Cape of Good Hope and of Malacca, and Secretary of the High Government of Batavia. (ca. 1660)*

Oil on canvas, 94 x 69 cm  
(rijksmuseum.nl [Online]).



Figure 2.7: A possible representation of Maria van Riebeeck, according to the Rijksmuseum archives.

Anonymous.

*Maria Quevellerius (1629-64), first wife of Jan van Riebeeck, or the second wife, Maria Scipio (ca. 1630-95). (ca. 1660)*

Oil on canvas, 93 x 69 cm  
(rijksmuseum.nl [Online]).

at the Cape; the first slaves worked in their household. They also had a live-in Khoekhoen girl, Krotoa who acted as an interpreter between the Dutch and the Khoekhoen. Besides being the Commander at the Cape, Van Riebeeck also assumed the role of commander in charge of the rest of the Company's men. For these reasons, Van Riebeeck is a key figure in this thesis. Much of the researched information for this study derives from his diaries. He was one of the few literates at the Cape at the time and was compelled by the Company to keep rigorous records of everything. Although these images have been circulated as depictions of the Van Riebeecks, research conducted for this study confuted this claim. The faces in the depictions (Figure 2.4 and 2.5) are those of the Vermuyden-Kettings (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 43). Figure 2.6 and 2.7 represent true depictions of Commander Jan van Riebeeck and his wife (according to the Rijksmuseum collection this could perhaps be van Riebeeck's second wife, Maria Scipio<sup>29</sup>). It is unclear why these false images have been circulated and even been used on national currency (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 43).

Jan van Riebeeck was first accompanied to the Cape by approximately a hundred people. These included soldiers, sailors, gardeners, builders, artisans, women and children. Karel Schoeman describes how these people came from the lower ranks of the European society, and how they soon started to fight among themselves and against the VOC command. They were also among the first to *drost*<sup>30</sup> and try to run away into the countryside (Schoeman 2001: 30).

The countryside proved harsh, though, and soon these men surrendered (Schoeman 2001: 31). They were subjected to the first forms of discipline at the Cape, the first of a long history of discipline and punishment. What is interesting is that these men were sentenced to enforced slavery. These were the very first cases of enslavement reported at the Cape (Schoeman 2001: 31). Therefore, it can be argued that these cases acted as a catalyst for the command at the Cape to order more slaves from the board of directors.

---

<sup>29</sup> According to Giliomee and Mbenga (2007: 43) no real likeness of Maria van Riebeeck, the one who lived at the Cape, exists.

<sup>30</sup> The Dutch term *drost* can be translated as 'deserting' or 'absconding' (Ross, 1983: x).

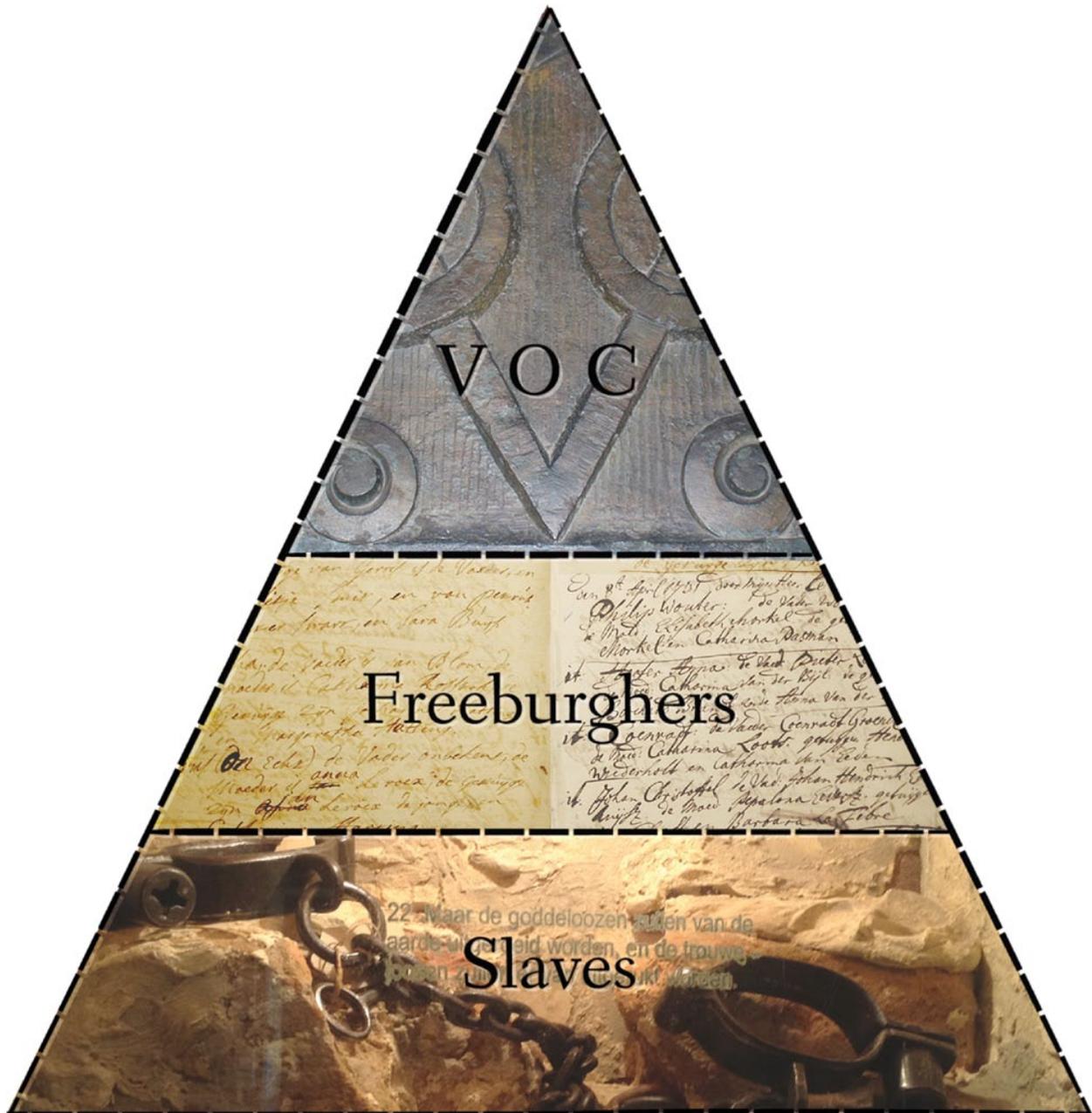


Figure 2.8: This pyramid graph visualises the power structure at the Cape in the seventeenth century. The images used to represent the different power structures at the Cape include a VOC emblem carved above the entrance to the Castle in Cape Town (1680); a copy of the muster roll at the Cape listing the Freeburghers (n.d.); and Original slave cuff shackles at the Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town. (Photo: Carla Kruger)]. (Graph by Carla Kruger 2013)

In his role as Commander at the Cape, Jan van Riebeeck wrote to the Gentlemen XVII to have the workers who came with him on the ships 'emancipated' in some way. This request was made to relieve the high command of the financial burden and so to afford better and more fine clothing (Schoeman 2001: 35). This is revealing of the specific identity the VOC wanted to display of the Europeans living at the Cape. They needed to be emancipated in order to afford the 'look' that suited the soon-to-be masters and mistresses.

These emancipated VOC workers then became the free burghers at the Cape. Although they were described as 'free', these farmers (who were completely novice to the farming trade<sup>31</sup>) were forced to sell all their products back to the company in return for a fixed rate. Van Riebeeck implored the Gentlemen XVII to send the Cape some slaves to help with the work. Each of these free burghers would then be given a slave on loan from the company to improve their productive outset. This was done to ensure the supply of better and cheaper products to the Company.

The pyramid graph (Figure 2.8) visualises the power structure at the Cape. It shows the VOC at the top; the small panel of command at the Cape had the most power (one may ask how and why). The free burghers reported to these Commanders. Although they had a certain amount of power over their own slaves, they still had to answer to the Command in terms of total power over their slaves.

If ever there had been any qualms about the nature of the Dutch (VOC) slave trade, it was soon laid to rest by Eurocentric propaganda and a so-called 'science' and 'moral purpose'. This can be argued based on the excerpt from Schoeman (2007: 17) below:

Only a relatively small group of ministers of religion and laymen in the Netherlands questioned the morality of Dutch participation in the slave trade and slavery, but justification was found in Scripture and in historical precedent, and specious arguments were presented in favour of slavery such as the opportunities it provided for converting the heathen. The VOC itself was never inclined to let moral questions interfere with business and profit.

---

<sup>31</sup> These free burghers consisted of those Europeans who came with Van Riebeeck to help build the refreshment station. They were sailors, soldiers and builders (Schoeman 2007: 12).

Therefore religion was used as a tool in justifying the practice of slave trading as well as an identity construction and oppressive manipulation technique, as the Europeans forced the slaves at the Cape to adopt their religion (Christianity) as their own in order to be baptised and eventually manumitted (Schoeman 2007: 150).

### 2.2.2 Using appearances to assert differences in hierarchies between the self and the 'Other' at the Cape

From the power structure at the Cape delineated above, it can be deduced that the Europeans had a set idea about what they wanted to achieve at the Cape and how. They needed to execute these plans swiftly and smoothly, while maintaining the upper hand. Several tools formed part of the Eurocentric method of colonisation and domination, many of which included a 'rationalised' manner of delivering discourse. During the Golden Age, Europe – and especially the Netherlands – had exceptional Eurocentric ideas about their country and their beliefs. Jim Blaut, the author of *Eight Eurocentric Historians* (2000), provides a very apt description of Eurocentrism as a practice:

“Eurocentrism” is a term that was coined fairly recently to indicate a subspecies of ethnocentrism. The latter word in its most common usage means thinking or action or discourse that is “centered” on one ethnic community and falsely claims for that community a superiority, in worth or characteristics, over communities or the rest of the world. I use the term “Eurocentrism”, then to indicate false claims by Europeans that their society or region is, or was in the past, or always has been and always will be, superior to other societies or regions. The key word here is “false”. It is not Eurocentric to prefer European music to other music, or European cuisine to other cuisine. It is Eurocentric to make the claim that Europeans are more inventive, innovative, progressive, noble, courageous, and so on, than every other group of people; or that Europe as a place has a more healthy, productive, stimulating environment than other places. It is not Eurocentric to extol “England’s green and pleasant land,” but it is Eurocentric to claim that this land is greener and more pleasant than all other lands of the world (Blaut 2000: 4).

These values were used as a basis to justify the European imperialist claim. The various discourses the Europeans acclaimed included the notion that they were the most intelligent, the most 'correct' in their religion, and the most powerful (I am of the opinion that this notion was visualised by wearing white cuffs and collars). The discourse was

naturalised over time, reiterating that each different character should play their different roles, and not migrate from one class to another. Therefore it is noteworthy that there were three women<sup>32</sup> at the Cape who wilfully migrated through these set boundaries and subsequently had an impact on the history at the Cape. A discussion of the role these three women played follows in the next subchapter.

**2.2.3 Three women at the Cape who played a role in challenging the set power structure**  
Before slavery became an institution at the Cape, a clear segregation of ethnicities, if not classes, existed. The Dutch and the Khoekhoen survived, each in their own space of the land. However, the Dutch encroached more and more each day on the land of the Khoekhoen. A Khoekhoen child by the name of Krotoa was invited into Van Riebeeck's household and so the first process of cultural hybridisation started to occur. The maritime trade at that time was of such a nature that people ebbed and flowed into and out of the small community at the Cape, as long as it was approved by the Commander. Such early cases included slaves from the East (Batavia). Two women, Catharina van Bengalen and Maria van Bengalen, came to live at the Cape as manumitted slaves and both married European men. So commenced the long history of interwoven genealogy at the Cape. In the following paragraphs, the Khoekhoen child Krotoa, together with Catharina and Maria van Bengalen are discussed as first instances of disruption of the Eurocentric divided dualistic narrative at the Cape.

Schoeman (2007: 38) writes about the fact that many Europeans who returned to the Netherlands from India brought slaves with them on the journey. As it was not allowed by the VOC to bring slaves into the Netherlands, many were left at the Cape and ordered to be sent back to India. Some were sent back to Batavia and were granted their freedom as a 'gesture of goodwill' from the owners. Some were granted their freedom here at the Cape and they decided (and were allowed) to stay (Schoeman 2007: 38). Schoeman describes this phenomenon when he explains that with the arrival of the slaves at the Cape, the multiracial nature of the VOC's trading empire became apparent (Schoeman 2007: 39). He writes that even though they were often

---

<sup>32</sup> Catharina van Bengalen, Maria van Bengalen and Eva or Krotoa of the Goringhaicona.

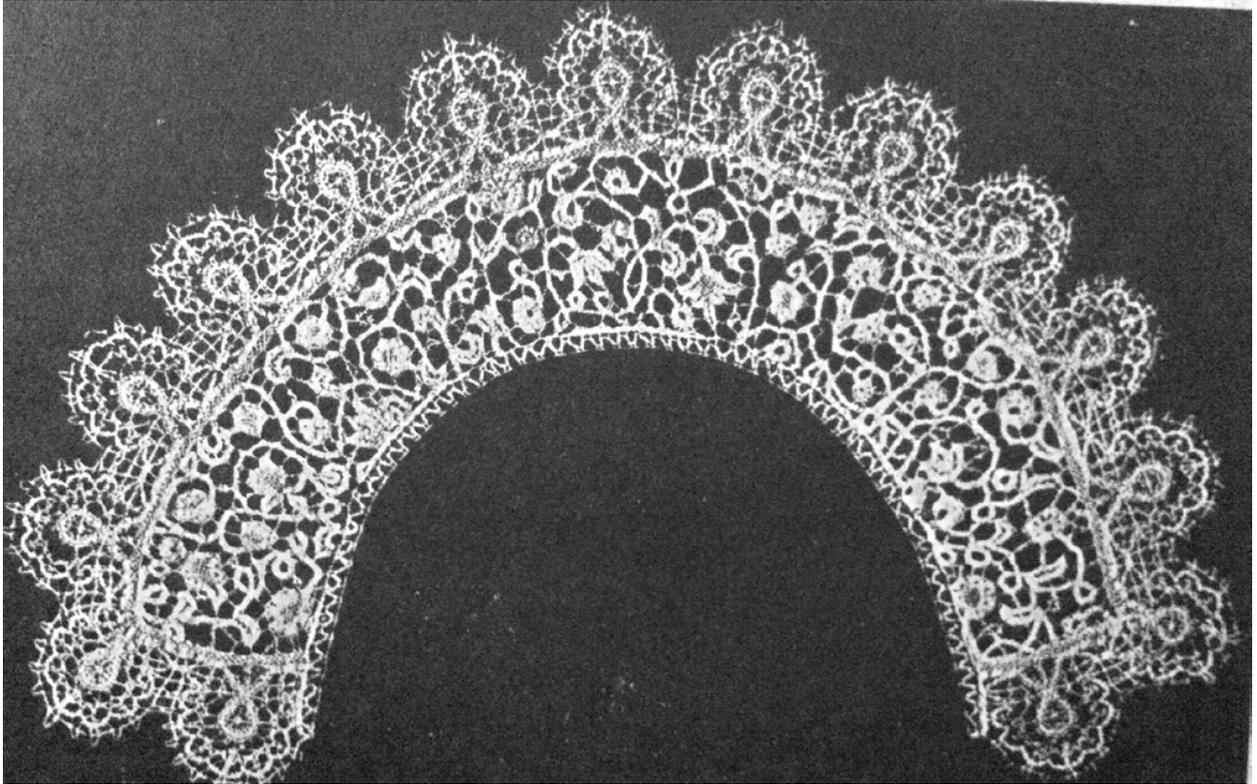


Figure 2.9: Bobbin-Lace Collar, seventeenth century.  
(Von Boehn, 1970)

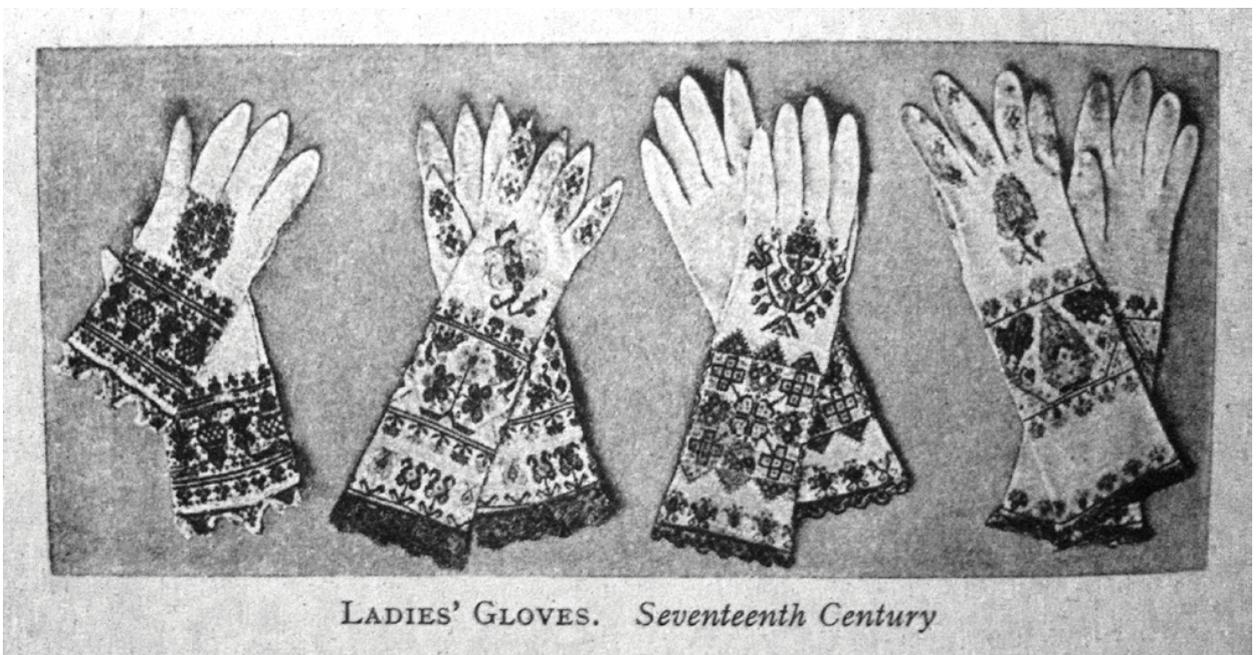


Figure 2.10: Ladies' gloves, seventeenth century.  
(Von Boehn, 1970)

only transient visitors, the first racially mixed marriage took place after only a few years (Schoeman 2007: 39). One can only speculate whether this marriage was out of a lack of women at the Cape or out of love.

The interesting fact about the first years at the Cape, before slavery became an institution, is that the few slaves that were living here were regarded as '*burghers*' or citizens. The multiracial nature of the VOC's enterprise was accepted everywhere, for the moment at least. This can be seen in the marriage of Jan Woutersz and Catharina van Bengale in 1656, only four years after the settlement at the Cape. Woutersz was an assistant to the surgeon at the Cape, and he was regarded as part of the inner circle of the command at the Cape. His new wife was also accepted into this circle and was looked after by the rest of the command when her husband was sent on expeditions (Schoeman 2001: 36).

This woman from the East might have intrigued the ladies of the command into accepting her into their inner circle. However, the novelty wore off and the intrigue became less appealing with time. The dualistic relationship of 'self' and 'Other' would have once again emerged at the Cape — something the Europeans in the seventeenth century were prone to.

A manumitted slave such as Catharina, who had not been a slave at the Cape, could have contributed something of her history and culture back in Batavia, in the East. The slaves who were imported directly to the Cape to work did not have this privilege. They were stripped of their names, traditions and any signs of heritage they had. Catharina, as a woman who now had her freedom and a place in the elite society of the Cape — even though it was slightly precarious — most probably inspired the Dutch in a similar way an excursion to the East might have done. A bit of 'Oriental' heritage, right here at the Cape, would have been interesting to the Dutch who only had their own small group and the Khoekhoen to socialise with.

The influence of slave heritages, inspired by their different backgrounds, is apparent in many patterns of western products, such as fabric and ceramics. Although these

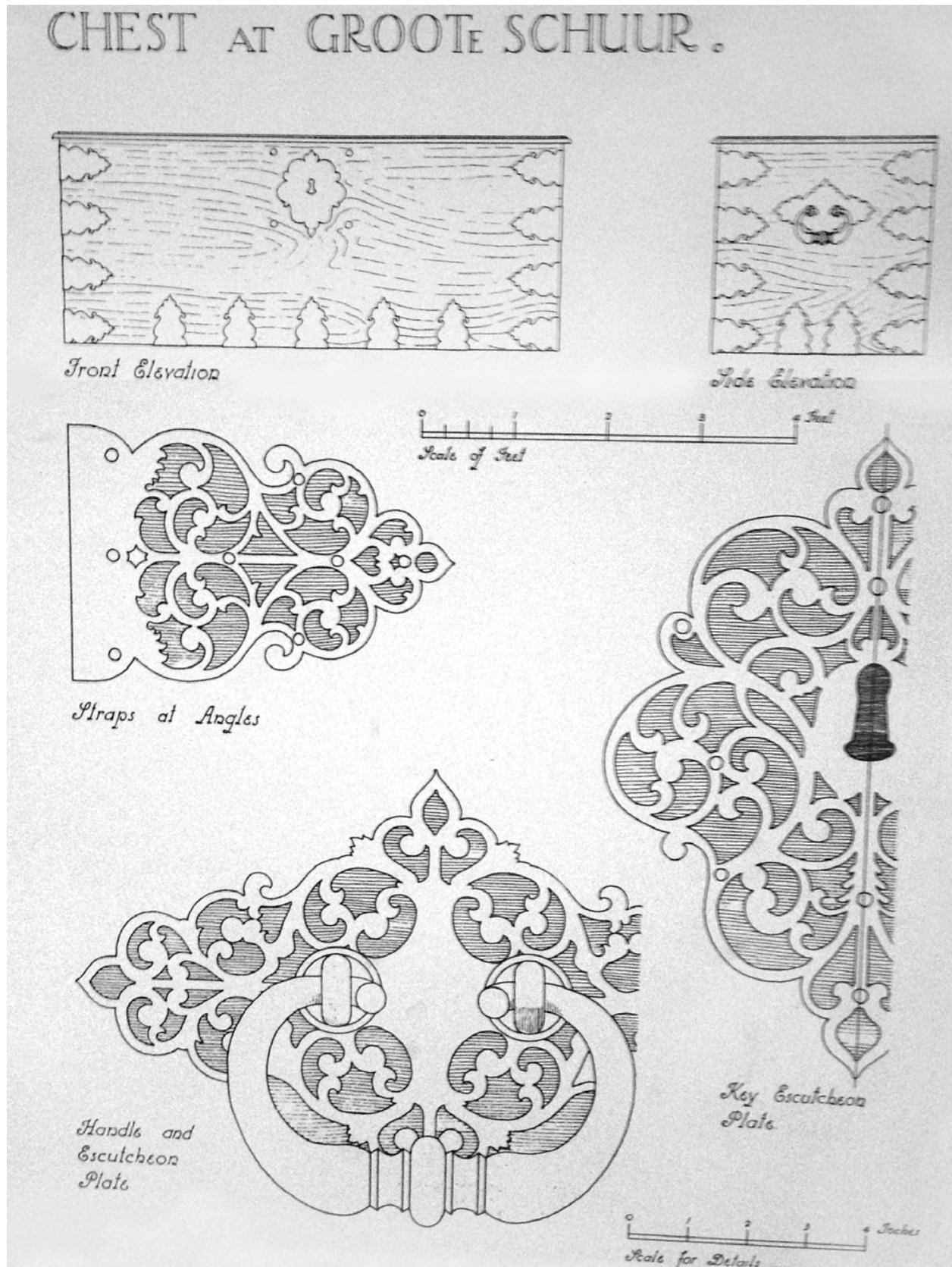


Figure 2.11: Original sketches of the details of Cape Dutch furniture. These sketches can be found on the Delaire Graff Estate, outside Stellenbosch.

(Photo by Carla Kruger)

products might have been influenced by the VOC's vast empire in the East, the Cape definitely developed its own unique style, even though it only started to emerge years later, when the colony at the Cape was well established. Figure 2.9 shows an example of a seventeenth century bobbin-lace collar, and Figure 2.10 displays ladies gloves. Both are influenced by patterns from the East.

A definite 'Cape Dutch' style has emerged in the architecture and furnishings of many of the old farmhouses of colonial times. Ever since, it became a style that was true to the Afrikaner at the Cape. This represented a simplified version of Dutch and Eastern aesthetics, with local influences, much the same as the way in which the Afrikaans language developed<sup>33</sup>. Examples of this aesthetic in Cape Dutch furniture is represented in Figure 2.11.

According to Schoeman, marriages between a white man and a white woman on a passing ship were not uncommon during early years when there was a great shortage of marriage partners. However, the union of Catharina van Bengalen and Jan Woutersz was the first mixed-race marriage at the Cape (Schoeman 2007: 40). These mixed-race marriages became more common in the next few years and remained common throughout the entire history of this country. It is then interesting (yet not surprising) to note that the apartheid government proclaimed mixed-race marriages illegal. Alistair Boddy-Evans questions the purity of the average Afrikaner in an online article. He quotes Professor Johannes Heese's book *Die Herkoms van die Afrikaner*<sup>34</sup> in which Heese found that the average Afrikaner is 7.2% nonwhite (Boddy-Evans n.d.).

Jan Woutersz's life is well documented and many details of his wedding and marriage are available. This may imply that he was thoroughly investigated and the Commander kept a close eye on him. This could have been as a result of the very fact that he was marrying a former slave and woman of colour. It could also be that he was merely a troublesome worker. Van Riebeeck documented several occasions where Woutersz

---

<sup>33</sup> This phenomenon will be discussed in section 4.2.3.

<sup>34</sup> Professor Johannes August Heese was Professor Hans Heese's (who wrote *Groep sonder Grense* (2005) father. (Breuer, 2012)

conducted himself in an improper manner. It might be interesting to note that it was only the 'outcasts' and lowest class of society that married outside of their race. Boddy-Evans also stated that it would have been frowned upon for a person of high social status to marry someone of a different race. They might have been expected to return to Europe (where it would most definitely have been frowned upon) or another colony. Yet it was the lower classes 'and soldiers that tended to stay' and subsequently formed the backbone of the society at the Cape. (Boddy-Evans n.d.)

After his marriage Woutersz was still sent out regularly to Dassen Island, but he and his wife would have lived in the Fort, which was the only accommodation available, and quite likely in the main building with the other officials and their families. He is said to have eaten at the Commander's table, together with other officials such as the sick comforter, the upper surgeon and the bookkeeper, and his wife, 'a former slave of the Lord Bogaert'<sup>35</sup>, is specifically stated to have had her meals there during his absence, and to have received the same 'honour and respect' as their wives. When she became pregnant it appears also to have been anticipated that she would be assisted by the latter in her confinement, as was customary at the time. (Schoeman 2007: 41)

Being sent to perform hard manual labour on Dassen Island, Woutersz must have become disgruntled with his situation. This caused tensions to rise in the small community at the Cape. Eventually Woutersz was found guilty of slandering Commander Jan van Riebeeck and his wife, and he was banished to excavate the soft white rock on Robben Island. Catharina was sent along to accompany him (Schoeman 2007: 42). Whether the entire slander case was just a ruse to get Catharina out of the white inner circle at the Fort, remains a mystery. A few years later Woutersz was again found guilty of slander and other bad behaviour. This resulted in him and Catharina to be exiled to the East (Schoeman 2007: 43).

In *Groep Sonder Grense* (2005) Professor Hans Heese lists the second case of mixed marriage at the Cape, the union between the free burgher Jan Sacharias from Amsterdam and Maria van Bengalen, slave of the sick-comforter, Pieter van der Stael (Heese 2005: 23). Apparently, Sacharias bought her freedom with the aim to marry her. A document of the Political Council states that Maria already had some knowledge of

---

<sup>35</sup> This 'former slave of the Lord Bogaert' refers to Catharina van Bengalen (Schoeman, 2007: 40)

the Dutch language as well as of the Christian Reformed Church. Their union was concluded on 21 July 1658 and their daughter Maria was baptised at the Fort on 8 April 1660 (Heese 2005: 23). The couple was exiled to Robben Island to replace Jan Woutersz as superintendent (Schoeman 2007: 44).

Both men who married ex-slaves from other races were eventually sent to work Robben Island. They most probably perceived this as a banishment, even though they were sent there in their official capacity. This definitely represents a case of 'Othering'. In 'An Introduction: narrating the nation', from his book *Nation and Narration*, Homi K. Bhabha describes the European process of 'Othering' as "discourses that signify a sense of 'nationness':

If the ambivalent figure of the nation is a problem of its transitional history, its conceptual indeterminacy, its wavering between vocabularies, then what effect does this have on narratives and discourses that signify a sense of 'nationness': the *heimlich* pleasures of the hearth, the *unheimlich* terror of the space or race of the Other; the comfort of social belonging, the hidden injuries of class; the customs of taste, the powers of political affiliation; the sense of social order, the sensibility of sexuality; the blindness of bureaucracy, the strait insight of institutions; the quality of justice, the common sense of injustice; the language of the law and the parole of the people (Bhabha 1990: 2).

Based on Bhabha's description above, one can deduce that 'Othering' is the process of identifying oneself, by juxtaposing oneself with some other, who is different in some way, and setting certain hierarchies in terms of the relationship. Were these the first signs of racism and/or apartheid at the time? For this reason it interests me to investigate this first group of people, those who set the groundwork for this country's political climate in later years. This satellite group of people started exhibiting preconceived aversion against 'the Other' without having any previous experience in encountering 'Others' except for the Khoekhoen. Back in Europe these Dutch citizens must have learnt about 'the Others' at school, whether it was from anthropologists or ethnographers and their travels and 'findings'<sup>36</sup>. They were taught to treat anyone who

---

<sup>36</sup> I use 'findings' in annotated commas to draw attention to the fact that these findings of so-called ethnographical studies were offered as scientifically correct, while they were in fact the products of imperialist discourse. These fictional claims and representations about the 'Other' was used as propaganda in the Eurocentric agenda at the Cape (Pieterse 1995: 10).



Figure 2.12: A representation of what Krotoa (or Eva as the Dutch called her) may have looked like (Penguin Films 2013 [Online]).

was different as an 'Other'. This was deeply entwined with the Eurocentric doctrine. Schoeman writes about the tension these preconceived notions of 'the Other' caused in the society at the Cape:

It is a striking fact that both men who married ex-slave wives during the early years at the Cape ended up on Robben Island. This may be coincidence, but seems less so when one bears in mind that Sacharias's successor Van Meerhoff likewise had a non-white wife, the Khoi interpreter Krotoa, who became an alcoholic while living on the island, if this process had not begun earlier. Quite possible there were tensions in all three marriages which made it preferable to remove the couples concerned from the small white community in Table Bay, but even if this was the case, it seems likely that the tensions were caused largely by the community itself. As had already been mentioned in the case of Catharina van Bengalen, the latter consisted mainly of people from Northern Europe with little or no experience or even knowledge of the East or of non-European peoples, and a considerable amount of racial prejudice, as was made even clearer in their relations with the Khoikhoi (Schoeman 2007: 48).

Even though they might have been shunned from the community, Catharina and Maria van Bengalen were "nonetheless regarded in principle as members of the white community, whatever degree of acceptance they may have experienced in practice" (Schoeman 2007: 48). According to Schoeman, their manumission and subsequent marriages to whites are most likely what afforded them this courtesy. One might wonder what status they would have held had they not married Europeans or married at all.

Krotoa, the Khoekhoen niece of Autshumato (Herrie) the *Strandloper* was an important character in the history of the first settlement at the Cape. She is relevant in this context, not only because she was also a woman of colour who married a white European, but also because she was assimilated into the Van Riebeeck household at a young age. According to Van Riebeeck's diary entries, she reacted eagerly on Maria van Riebeeck's Christian teachings (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 51).

According to Giliomee and Mbenga in *New History of South Africa* (2007) Eva (as the Dutch called Krotoa) was a fierce friend of the Dutch and established an efficient working relationship between the Fort and the followers of Oedaso, her wealthy kin. At that time

(the 1650's) Eva was one of the only people at the Cape with ample knowledge of the Khoekhoen, as well as the Dutch culture. Tradition has it that Eva traded her western clothes for animal skins whenever she visited the Khoekhoen (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 51).

In 2009 Patric Tariq Mellet wrote *Drawing the longbow in the VOC Fort: Krotoa of the Goringhaicona and Cochoqua (1642-1674)*. This article is published on a genealogy website for individuals who want to enquire whether Krotoa is part of their ancestry. Mellet (2009) quotes Willem ten Rhijne, a Dutch visitor to the Cape who described Krotoa as “a masterpiece of nature”.

She had embraced Christianity, spoke fluent English, Dutch, French and Portuguese and was conversant with the Holy Scriptures (...). in short, she was most commendable, being trained in all womanly crafts and married to one of the surgeons serving the company (Mellet 2009).

Yet Mellet has unearthed sufficient evidence that Krotoa was not entirely assimilated into the white culture as the quote above might suggest. She was only baptised in 1662, and Mellet finds this fact proof that she was never completely integrated into the community, and was always reminded of her place in the small community at the Cape. He writes that baptism was the true measure of acceptance into the European community at the Cape. He notes that her dress was also not typical of European women or children, but rather of the Asian slaves. He attains that this was symbolic of her servitude status at the Fort (Mellet 2009).

Mellet poses concern that Eva's childhood might not have been so idyllic as the Commander attempted to portray in his diaries. He writes that there are very little facts to support such assumptions and writes instead of a childhood of servitude and abuse. He proclaims that Eva might have been sexually abused by many of the Company officials in her teenage years of which her two illegitimate children she borne while living at the Fort serve as proof. He references Karel Schoeman's *Seven Khoi Lives* (2009) when he describes Eva as a member of neither her own nor the European culture. “Krotoa was torn between being Eva and Krotoa” (Mellet 2009). She was only used by both her family and the Dutch (her foster family) as an interpreter and Schoeman refers

to her as having “promising contact”<sup>37</sup> in Van Riebeeck’s eyes. Her work as an interpreter caused her to be distrusted by her own culture as well as the Dutch.

In 1664 she married Pieter van Meerhoff. Meerhoff (originally from Copenhagen) arrived at the Cape in 1659 as a soldier. He played a large part in several reconnaissance excursions and subsequently earned the rank of assistant surgeon. They were married in the church and Eva was given a large dowry, befitting of any of the children of Company officials at the Cape at the time (Heese 2005: 24).

Eva gave Van Meerhoff three children, and accompanied him when he became superintendent of Robben Island<sup>38</sup>. This move succeeded in cutting Eva off from her livelihood — the contact between her two peoples — the Khoekhoen and the Dutch (Mellet 2009). However, it is rumoured that she was posing an embarrassment at the Cape as everyone at the Fort knew of the dalliances she had with the European men. Van Meerhoff also grew tiresome of life on the island and signed up for a slaving expedition to Madagascar where he was killed in a skirmish with the indigenous people (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 51). After her husband’s death Eva returned to the Cape with her children and by all accounts became an alcoholic who dabbled in prostitution (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 51). Her children were fostered by a Dutch family and Eva was incarcerated for her ‘dissolute’ behaviour. She spent the last five years of her life in prison on Robben Island, where she died in 1674. Her children went on to become the ancestors of many prominent families in South Africa (Mellet 2009).

In *New History of South Africa* Giliomee and Mbenga write about how the Dutch used Eva’s spiral into dissolution and death as characteristic of the Khoekhoen.

After her death the Dutch upheld her tragic life story as ‘evidence’ that the Khoi-Khoi could not adopt the best aspects of European culture. The official

---

<sup>37</sup> As cited in (Mellet 2009). This ‘promising contact’ in Van Riebeck’s eyes most probably indicates the diplomatic value of Krotoa/Eva’s marriage to a VOC employee (and European). See also G.M. Frederickson’s *White Supremacy: a comparative study in American and South African history* (1981) for a parallel comparative study of the value of the diplomatic marriages of Pocahontas and John Rolfe in North America and Pieter van Meerhoff with Eva (Frederickson 1981: 110 - 111).

<sup>38</sup> Here, again we witness the ‘exile’ of the mixed marriages at the Cape to Robben Island.



Figure 2.13: *Portret of Johannes Wtenbogaert*, Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, 1633.  
Oil on canvas. 130 x 103 cm.  
(rijksmuseum.nl [Online])



Figure 2.14: Artist unknown. *Portrait of an Old Lady in seventeenth century costume*. 1656.  
Oil on panel. 96 x 67 cm.  
(Bowes Museum 2006 [Online])

diary entry states: 'Like a dog she returns to her own vomit, a clear indication that human nature, regardless of being influenced by strong moral values, is to return to their innate characteristics' [Own translation] (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 51).

These three women are key examples of disruptions to the accepted power structures at the Cape. All three of them were sent to Robben Island to remove them from the small community at the Cape. The fact that all three of these women were only the beginning of this kind of disruption of power must have been a great ailment to the Command at the time — and similarly to several apartheid leaders later on. I include them here as their stories are paramount examples of the histories which I hope to unearth with my research — the histories on which The Ruff/Rough collection is based.



## 2.3 White Collar

### 2.3.1 The historical development of the ruff as a symbol of Eurocentric power

In this section, the ruff, as an example of a white collar with exceptional influence on adornment, fashion and especially the notion of power-dressing through the ages, will be discussed. The ruff also served as a catalyst symbol for oppression. It is described as 'the collar with meaning' in an article posted in 2008 by a blog contributor called 'Scribner' on the history blog, the Aurora History Boutique.

According to Scribner the ruff is an extension of a simple collar. The phenomenon first appeared in the sixteenth century and established itself as a form of fashion as it grew in length and breadth. Scribner holds the view that it was during this time that the ruff started to take on symbolic meaning and aesthetic value.

It grew out of the gathering of fabric at the neckline of the typical chemise or undergarment, worn under outer layers of clothing. The chemise served to protect the outer layers of clothing from excessive wear and washing and were usually made of sturdier linen that could be bleached and cleaned with frequency. The collection of fabric at the neckline, that would be tied or cinched and form a small collar, would often stand out in its own whiteness and in its fabric composition against the features of the wearer's outer garments. By virtue of this initial distinction it came to have an importance in its own right and the



Figure 2.15: *Portrait of a Woman*.  
Abraham van den Tempel, 1646.  
Oil on canvas. 76 x 66 cm.  
(rijksmuseum.nl [Online])

aesthetic language of the collar, or more elaborate ruff, broadened (Scribner 2008).

Scribner goes on to establish that the ruff survived longest as an accessory in Holland. It evolved quickly and became a form separate from the chemise and grew to the most extravagant sizes. Cartwheel ruffs were popular until the mid seventeenth century and were often so wide — up to a foot and a half — so that they required wiring to retain their shape. Starch was otherwise used to maintain the shape of ruffs (Encyclopedia Britannica Online 2013). “The rigidity of the ruff thus ensured that the wearer projected a dignified pose that, due to hindered movement, suggested a life of leisure and attendance to” (Scribner 2008). This suggestion of symbolism of the ruff that denotes wealth and power— the fact that it hindered movement to the extent that it suggested that one stayed more or less in the same position the whole day. This phenomenon is worlds apart from the working-class individual, who would wear something more practical for a day's work. Therefore the donning of a ruff was a circumstance that was worlds apart from the dress of the slaves.

Women's fashion initiated further adaptations in its style, such as the opening of the form at the centre to enhance femininity, if not to facilitate eating and movement. The ruff was so hindering, that it even prohibited the wearer from normal daily activities such as eating (Scribner 2009). This would not have been sustainable, even if it was a major symbolic proclamation that the wearer did not *need to work*. “Eventually the ruff gave way to the standing collars, but essentially paved the way for centuries of further enhancement and embellishment at the neckline” (Scribner 2008). The images below illustrate the development in Dutch fashion, as well as the development of the opening of the cuff in the front to facilitate movement and eating.

The Encyclopedia Britannica Online implies that by the end of the sixteenth century the ruff was generally replaced by other collars (2013). These are the simplified collars we see in the portraits of the Van Riebeecks at the Cape. Even though they did not necessarily wear ruffs anymore, it is my deduction that the purpose of these collars was still to exert power on a visual level.

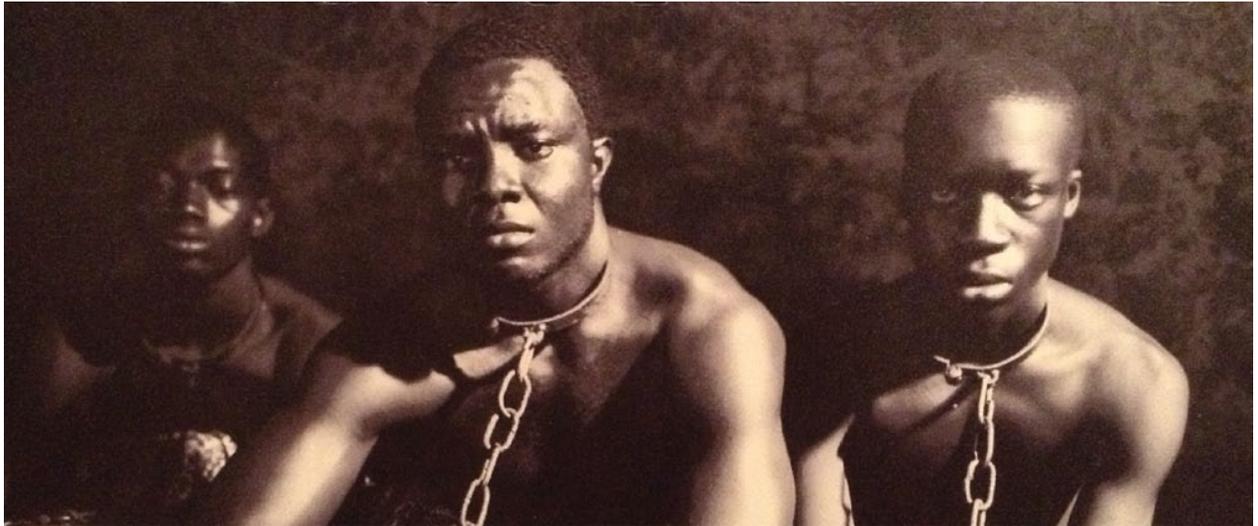


Figure 2.16: A modern depiction of slaves in bondage. Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town.  
(Photo: Carla Kruger)

### 2.3.2 The restricting nature of both the ruff and the slave collar

When slaves were first introduced to the Cape in 1658, they were more or less allowed to roam free during the day, as long as their work had been done by the end of the day. Yet, whenever some of the slaves tried to run away, the male slaves were ordered to be put in chains (these included cuffs, ball-and-chain and neck collars) to keep them from absconding (Ross 1983: 12)<sup>39</sup>. The significance of this act might have been an obvious or practical one in the eyes of Van Riebeeck, but the symbolic meaning of this encompasses the entire Eurocentric practice of oppression. The Europeans wanted to assert this practice (by placing the slaves in physical chains, see figure 2.16) in order to exert power over their slaves and eventually build up the powerful empire — the VOC — which the Cape was part of.

The *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2010) describes a 'collar' as "a band of material around the neck of an item of clothing either upright or turned over". The origin is described as Middle English originating from the Old French *collier* (the Modern French word for 'necklace') and from the Latin came *collare* 'band for neck' and from *collum* 'neck'. On closer inspection of the neck as a symbolic area of the body to wear jewellery, or specifically a collar, one could possibly identify a number of semiotic properties in terms of the importance of that specific area — below the head and above the body. The collar could perhaps be worn around the neck to further help with the adornment of the facial area — this is after all where a person's identifying characteristics are situated. It could also have been worn for decoration or to promote status or, in the case of the slaves, to ascertain their position in life to naturalise the European cause.

Having worn accessories such as the European ruff that did not serve any function, showed wealth (Encyclopedia Britannica Online 2013). The same applied to adornments that actually *hindered* movement and function. So, if one considers the restricting nature of a collar today, for instance those that people put on dogs and other animals, it represents control. In the case of the master and slave, the restriction enforces a subjective lifestyle onto the slave. The Europeans positioned themselves on

---

<sup>39</sup> This situation will be thoroughly discussed in chapter 3.



Figure 2.17: *Connection*.

Heejin Hwang. 2010.

Steel wire, enamel, ground rock 28 x 28 x 10 cm

(Photo: Jim Escalante)

(Hwang 2010 [Online]).

one end of the binary scale of domination and power, and the slaves as far as possible at the opposite end of the same scale using these devices.

In *New History of South Africa* (2007), Herman Giliomee and Bernard Mbenga describes in the chapter “Influences from the Far East — Hierarchical tendencies”, how the Company officials and wealthiest burghers flaunted their wealth. “The wealthy were ready to display their status ostentatiously, as in a grand mansion, a retinue of servants, a parasol carried by a servant, and festive house parties with dancing on the veranda to music supplied by a slave orchestra. Almost everyone with some pretensions to status keenly aspired to the role of a slave-owner who abstained from manual labour” (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 45). Schoeman (2007: 23) explains that slaves had become a status symbol (interesting to note that wearing a ruff also constituted a status symbol).

Although events such as described above must have occurred some time after the initial settlement at the Cape<sup>40</sup>, slaves were seen as luxury ‘items’ and expensive possessions from the start (Schoeman 2007: 23). I can deduce from my research that the collar (slave collar and white European collar) was also used to indicate ownership, possession and power. As slaves were seen as some of the most valuable possessions at the seventeenth century Cape, some masters even imprinted the family name on the collar the slave was forced to wear in order to prevent them from running away (White & Beaudry 2009: 218) This notion of ownership and marking or inscription of possession will further be discussed in Chapter 4. Often the collars were used to bind the slaves physically to a place, with chains for example. Some collars were also made to be torturing devices.

### 2.3.3 The white collar used in art to subjectively subvert power relationships

Over the years and since it was first developed and worn as a statement of wealth and power, the ruff has been an inspiration for art, fashion and especially jewellery. On a

---

<sup>40</sup> The quote by Giliomee & Mbenga (2007: 45) is from the lifestyle of the slave-owning classes in the VOC colony of Batavia (today Jakarta). This model of lifestyle can be used to describe the lifestyle of the powerful and wealthy at the Cape in the later stages of colonialism and settlement



Figure 2.18: White Collar 15. 2005.

Anika Smulovitz.

Altered men's white shirt collars size 16 1/2.

(Photo: Tom McInville)

(Smulovitz 2012 [Online]).



Figure 2.19: White Collar 12. 2005.

Anika Smulovitz.

Altered men's white shirt collars size 16 1/2.

(Photo: Tom McInville)

(Smulovitz 2012 [Online]).



Figure 2.20: White Collar 9. 2004.

Anika Smulovitz.

Altered men's white shirt collars size 16 1/2.

(Photo: Tom McInville)

(Smulovitz 2012 [Online]).

global scale, artists and designers have been using the collar as a symbol of power. I have investigated several contemporary jewellery artists who have used the collar (and its properties as a symbol of power) as inspiration in their work. Heeijn Hwang is one such artist:

Figure 2.17 is of Heejin Hwang's work *With Authority* (2010) from the collection *Connection*. The title, *With Authority*, implies that when the wearer dons the collar, authority, which also implies power, is bestowed upon the individual wearing it. Hwang is interested in "framing the female identity through the lens of beauty, control, dignity, strength and vulnerability" (Hwang 2010).

Another contemporary jewellery artist using the collar to explore the characteristics of power is Anika Smulovitz (2005). In her collection (Figure 2.18 to 2.20) she used collars from men's shirts and altered them into shapes that remind the viewer of a ruff. She explains on her website that "white Oxford shirts have a long tradition of being the staple of the socially acceptable, upper-class male uniform" (Smulovitz 2005). She explains how her work could be perceived as trying to contest this power symbol (the white Oxford shirt collar):

The White Collar series manipulates this socially charged form of adornment/clothing, questioning status, gender, and sexuality. Exploring the gray area between textiles and jewelry, they investigate what is acceptable versus what is taboo. Why do similarly detached white collars, an essential component of the playboy bunny costume, evoke both female power and misogynistic male dominance? (Smulovitz 2005)

The above mentioned artists depict the ruff as an influence on global art and contemporary jewellery design. In terms of the white collar's influence on South African artists, Andrew Putter's work comes to mind. He created *Secretly I will love you more* (2007) based on the story of the 'fostering' of Krotoa, or Eva, by Maria Della Quellerie (Maria van Riebeeck). Although I have mentioned earlier in this chapter that history sources suggest Krotoa might not have had an idyllic childhood, Putter imagines here that Maria so loved Krotoa that she learnt her language. He wrote a lullaby in which Maria sings of her love for this child. At one point she sings: "I will love you as I love my own children — secretly I will love you more".



Figure 2.21: This version of the Playboy Bunny Costume can be bought on the website Burlesque Baby. The outfit was initially worn by the waitresses at the Playboy Club. With the club closed, the uniform has been appropriated as a sexy outfit

(Burlesque Baby 2013 [Online]).



Figure 2.22: *Secretly I will love you more.*

Andrew Putter. 2007.

Video Installation.

(Artthrob 2008 [Online])

This work comprises a video that is styled and photographed to resemble an oil painting. In 2011, I conducted an interview with Putter about some of his other work. During this interview he stated that he does not look at contemporary art, because he is too easily influenced. However, he does admire the legacy of these premodern European paintings. The fact that his works have often been mistaken for paintings is explained as “not so much a desire to fool the viewer as to be influenced ... by those old paintings” (Putter 2011). He informed me that he thus translated these old paintings into the digital realm, where he is more comfortable. The viewer would observe the work, wondering whether it is a painting or a photograph, when suddenly the mouth would start to move, and the subject would start to sing. In my opinion, Putter was influenced by the style and the composition of the oil paintings from the Dutch Golden Age. The fact that he transcribed it onto a digital platform could signify a fictional element — a ‘what if’ moment.

Putter’s penchant for working in a collaborative fashion gives his work a unique characteristic. He teams up with different artists who are renowned in their field of work in order to create multidimensional art that engages the viewer emotionally. According to Putter in an online article on the website Creative Africa Network (2009) Pedro Dausab translated the lyrics into click-filled Nama (the only Khoekhoen language still spoken) and working with Putter, they wrote a melody based on a traditional Bushman tune. Claire Watling, a well-known Cape Town actress, learnt the song, and after being costumed and staged to look like a portrait of a Dutch woman in the 1650s, sang the lullaby as if in a private reverie, the out-of-frame Krotoa just fallen asleep in her lap. Putter uses video and sound in his art to disrupt the quiet, sterile environment of the museum exhibition space, and engage the viewer on more than one level.

Maria Della Quellerie, the central character in this work, is staring straight at the viewer. The composition as well as her gaze creates the feeling of having intruded on a private moment. Yet, in a sense her gaze is also confrontational, almost like she is challenging the viewer to judge her for loving a Khoekhoen child. These utopian, suppositional scenes in Putter’s work are mnemonics to what might have been if history took another course. It is this technique of fictionalising history that I intend to explore in my own work as well.

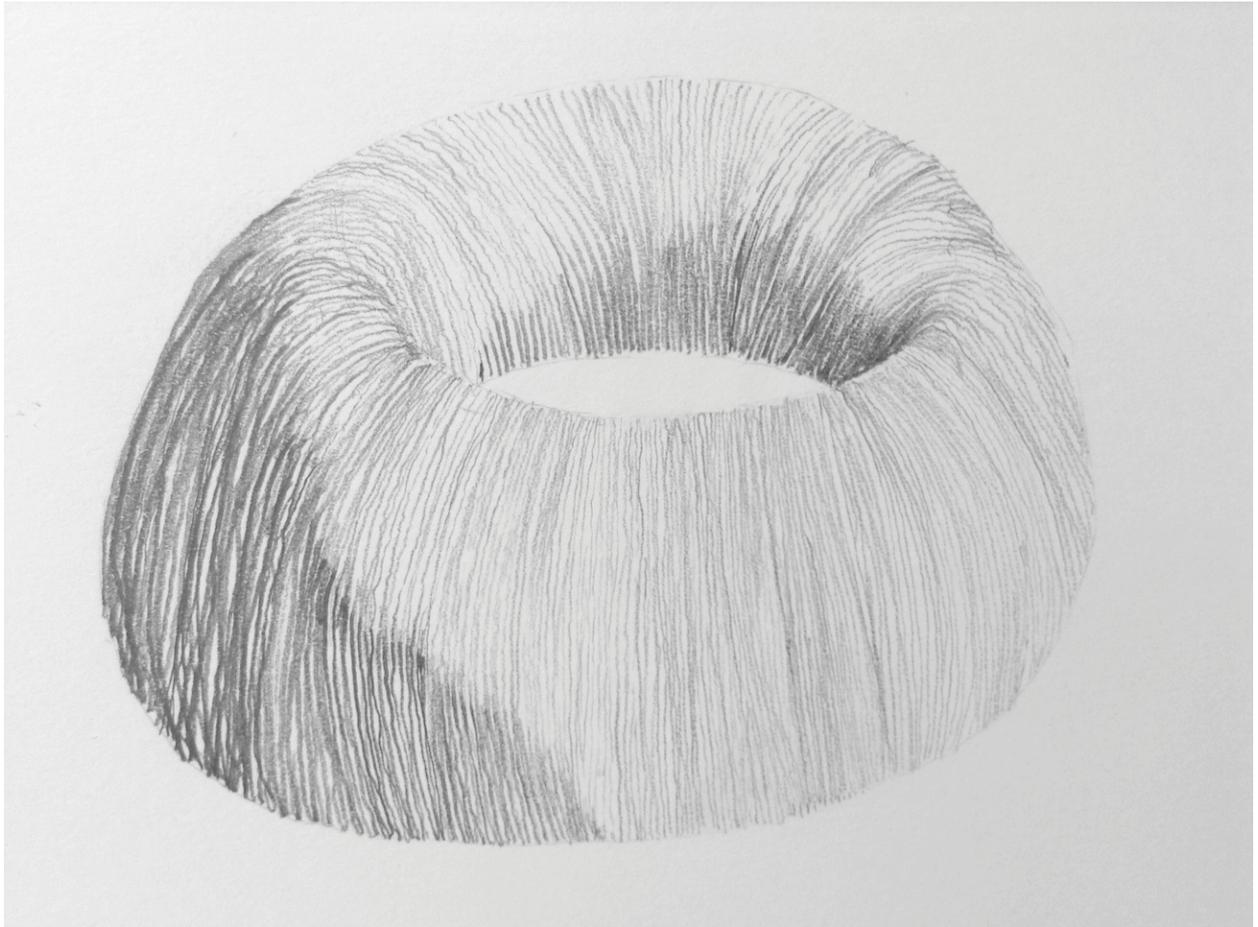


Figure 2.23: *Sketch for Ruff/Rough Collection.*

Carla Kruger. 2013.

Graphite pencil, Fabriano.



#### 2.4 The Ruff/Rough Collection

The *Ruff/Rough Collection* is a contemporary collection of jewellery pieces using the narrative of the white ‘ruff’ collar as inspiration. Mixed with the visual narrative of slave chain and shackles it aims to create an amalgamation of ‘hard’ and ‘soft.’ The soft folds of the expensive silk merge flawlessly with the hard edges of the dark steel colour of the chains and shackles. Using the story of the ex-slave brides, as well as the Khoekhoen girl who came to live a European life as an inspiration to the narrative of the series, the aim is to subvert the notion of luxury and ownership in favour of freedom and independence.

A merging of the two aesthetics may invoke questions about who exactly the master is and who the subservient or slave. In order to undermine this relationship, friction must be created between the different aesthetics and narratives to create an uneasy feeling and subjectively question the Eurocentric practice of slavery. The actions and consequences of Eurocentrism<sup>41</sup> that paved the way for the society that exists in this country today, will also be called into question through this juxtaposition of different visual narrative and hierarchies. The deconstruction of these boundaries and a contemporary reinterpretation of this theme will act as my commentary and subjective opinion on this subject. To juxtapose different functions and aesthetics in the light of the socio-political atmosphere at the Cape, both then and now, and create work with a certain friction to it will hopefully raise some questions around the subject — even if the aim of the work is perhaps not to provide definitive answers, but merely to suggest a ‘might could have been’ scenario.

The collar in Figure 2.24 was created for the ex-slave bride Catharina van Bengalen.

---

<sup>41</sup> These actions include ‘Othering’, stereotyping, naturalisation and dualism, as theorised by Bhabha (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 35), Pieterse (1995: 224) and Plumwood (1993: 47) respectively, and have been discussed in the course of Chapter 2.



Figure 2.24: *For Catharina van Bengalen, on her wedding day.*  
Carla Kruger. 2013.  
Collar.  
Sterling silver, oxidised, Chinese Dupion silk.

She could have worn it on her wedding day. Her narrative — she was the manumitted slave who married a white member of the Company's service — served as inspiration for this piece. Would she be accepted into the white community? She must have brought some Eastern aesthetic elements with her from Bengal. In addition, her life in servitude must have taught her a few things too. Would she have the same degree of power as one of the European wives of the Company officials once she donned this collar? Most of these thoughts could be considered wishful thinking, but this piece still aims to instil a certain identity or attitude just by wearing a collar.

By asserting that the ruff was an object of power and luxury, the question could be posed whether it would have been appropriate for Catharina to wear such a collar? Did marriage afford her the degree of power that has been associated with a ruff? I would answer 'yes' and 'no' to these questions. 'Yes', in the sense that according to the multiracial nature of the VOC's dealings at the time, she was supposed to be afforded the same level of power as the other members of the inner circle of command at the Cape. And I would answer 'no' to the same question because history attests that she (and her husband) was exiled to Robben Island, and therefore, in reality, did not have any degree of power.

The same scenario as set out above for Catharina van Bengalen applies to the Union of Maria van Bengalen and Jan Saccharias. Figure 2.25 is the piece *For Maria van Bengalen*, on her wedding day. This piece, inspired by the same context as described for the piece *For Catharina van Bengalen*, also aims to ascribe some level of power or identity to the intended wearer (Maria van Bengalen). The work is an amalgamation between Western (European) and Eastern (Asian) aesthetic influences, to try to capture Maria van Bengalen's heritage and destiny (as a manumitted slave living at the Cape) in a visual narrative.

The third piece in this collection is depicted in figure 2.26. The work is influenced by the story of Eva/Krotoa's life at the Cape and her role as intermediary between the Dutch and the Khoekhoen. The fur pods resemble her native culture's traditional adornments, and the two shoulder adornments are connected by fine silver chain (European



Figure 2.25: *For Maria van Bengalen, on her wedding day.*

Carla Kruger. 2013.

Collar.

Chinese Dupion silk, sterling silver, garnets.

aesthetic). The chain and the connected narrative in the piece, as well as the fact that it takes the shape of a shoulder adornment, symbolises the notion that Krotoa/Eva was used as an intermediary in the (un)official capacity for both the Dutch and the Khoekhoen.

The (his)stories of these two women, as well as Krotoa/Eva (Figure 2.26) make up *The Ruff/Rough Collection*. Their stories are upheld in my work as ‘disruptions’ of the accepted power structure at the Cape, even if they might not have had an enormous effect. They had enough effect to become the ancestors of many South Africans today.



## 2.5 Conclusion

The Ruff has been defined in this chapter as an extension of the collar — an extension that was commissioned for the sole purpose of promoting the perception of prosperity and wealth. It indicated that the wearer was able to don this article of adornment, even though it inhibited movement and normal daily activities such as eating and executing hobbies. Though it might not have been completely impossible to part-take in certain activities while wearing this item, it certainly did not inspire hard work, or any activity that would work up a sweat. It rather, more than likely, promoted leisurely lounging around the house, a social gathering or the government chambers, wherever the wearer needed to be seen in it.

In *The Ruff/Rough Collection* the symbolism of this ‘article of luxury’ is juxtaposed the shackle and chains of a slave, the slave who many a time was also seen as a possession of the high social class at the Cape. Putting these two entities of wealth (the wearing of a ruff and the possession of a slave), luxury and power at odds with each other in a single visual piece of work, I aim to provoke questions of luxury, possession and power. The stories of the manumitted slaves Catharina and Maria van Bengalen, as well as the interloper, Eva/Krotoa, evoke the question about where their power existed, if they indeed had any. One might deduce that in spite of the

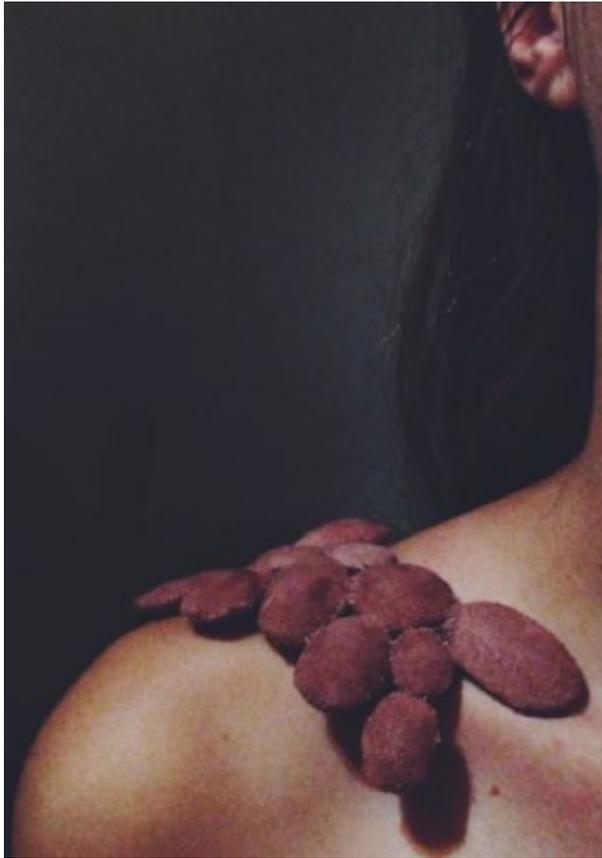


Figure 2.26: *For Krotoa (Eva) on her wedding day.*  
Carla Kruger. 2013.  
Shoulder adornment.  
Copper, animal skin, plasticized back.

self-proclaimed multiracial nature of the VOC's empire<sup>42</sup>, these women still had no power, and were indeed oppressed in a way, as they were exiled to Robben Island together with their husbands, as Schoeman proved in his research (Schoeman 2007: 48).

Utilising these objects (the ruff and the shackle) and their functions to superimpose their meaning in a single piece of contemporary jewellery, allows me to offer a range of adorning objects that carry peculiar feelings about them. As a result, one may feel that these pieces cannot be taken at face value; one needs to delve deeper to discover its meaning and in the process question one's own practice of accepting recorded history at face-value.

---

<sup>42</sup> (Schoeman 2007: 39)



## Chapter 3: The Shackle as the Burden of the Oppressed



### 3.1 Introduction

During my education at Jan van Riebeeck High, school we went on several class excursions to witness the history of the city of Cape Town first-hand. On one such occasion to the old VOC Castle the tour guide took us through the slave quarters. While regaling us with terrifying stories about the conditions in which the slaves lived, we were led into a room with no windows; only tiny slits at the top of the walls were visible. No light entered the damp space. As the guide informed us that this was where more than fifty slaves slept at night over three hundred years ago, the door to the room suddenly slammed closed. Whether it was by accident or on purpose – to give us a feel of the conditions in which the slaves had lived – I cannot remember. The only thing I do remember, besides the other teenage girls around me who screamed at the top of their voices, was the goosebumps on my skin. My reaction was not borne from a young girl's fear, but rather from intense empathy with those who occupied that room before me, three hundred years ago, as the master closed the door behind him and they were confined for the night until they were let out to start working again in the morning.

That experience acted as a catalyst for my interest to start searching for the stories of the slaves at the Cape. We had learnt that slaves were the backbone of civilisation and the same could be said of the slaves at the Cape. They were the foundation on which this thriving city was built. Why are their stories so hard to find? After a lot of searching I found a possible link through my own family to Florentina Moses van die Kaap – a woman with slave parentage. My grandfather's mother was Johanna Killian. Florentina Moses was an ancestor of this Killian family in the eighteenth century Cape. The search itself was an interesting experience. Personally, I find it odd that some people today still claim to belong to any kind of 'pure' (in terms of race) heritage. This entire concept seems strange once one starts to investigate one's own heritage in South Africa.

During a personal interview (2011) I asked Andrew Putter about his view on the general

representation of South African history. He replied: "History is always a story, and its story can always be told in an infinity of ways. How one tells it, changes what is valued or marginalised, what is remembered or forgotten." In this chapter, the artist's right to subjective prerogative, when (s)he recreates visual evidence of a culture or people who did not have the voice to do it for themselves, will be investigated. This will be done as a prelude to the discussion of my own work.

In Chapter 2, I briefly discussed Andrew Putter's work as a subjective re-telling of history to create an emotionally moving work of art. This informed my practice of including fictional elements that are based on veritable research in my work. This creates friction that lures the viewer into looking closer and then forcing them to question what they think they already knew. Another artist who also works within this theme is Fred Wilson. He is an American installation artist, whose work aims to critically undermine the practice of museum exhibiting. The prejudiced exhibition discourse that Wilson is trying to critique, he claims is prevalent throughout the contemporary art museum world and history of exhibition practice. Wilson ascertains that certain cultures have always been marginalised through the Eurocentric narrative and practice of anthropology and ethnography in so-called 'historical' art exhibitions. According to Wilson, especially African cultures and the history of slavery, have been pushed to the background of even (one would think) 'neutral' museum displays.

In this chapter the above-mentioned prerogative will be discussed in terms of Fred Wilson's work, as well as my own. Wilson tries to undermine the idea of taking for granted that a 'historical exhibition' in a renowned art museum is objective and 'truthful.' He aims to subvert this notion with his parodic installation work and let the viewer know they should question what they see and not always accept it as absolute truth. Western discourses have had an influence on the practice of museum exhibition through the ages. With his work, Wilson points out how many of these prejudices still exist in what we would perceive to be neutral ground in the museum art exhibition world (González 2008: 92).

My reasoning for discussing the history of slavery at the Cape in terms of Wilson's work

is due to the fact that I perceive the exhibitions and history-construction of the story of the slaves at the Cape comparable with the marginalised history of slaves in the USA with which Wilson works. He creates hybrid displays with the museum's own collection of art works and artefacts to comment on this marginalisation in history, which is similar to what I aim to achieve with my practical work, *The Shackle Collection*. This collection of my work consists of pieces which have been created with fictional elements hybridised with facts found in archives and history books. Visually and conceptually the collection is inspired by chains, shackles and other restraints the slaves were subjected to at times to symbolise and enforce their captivity. These aesthetics will be juxtaposed and fictionalised with elements of the Eurocentric aesthetic narrative.

Various aspects of the establishment of slavery at the Cape in 1658 will be treated in this chapter. This will serve as a background to a discussion of my own work, as well as the installation art of Fred Wilson. The theory focuses on the first few years of slavery at the Cape. The instances of punishment and resistance will be discussed and then critiqued as an interplay of power and oppression through symbols of bondage. Since the white ruling population contrasted themselves against 'the Other' in everyday life, the practice of history narration took on a similar tone. However, many works of the history authors<sup>44</sup> I consulted for this research already took on a sympathetic tone for the plight of the slaves, and an effort was made to find out more personal details about them. These valuable pieces of information, such as the rare cases where slaves made an appearance in the development of the society at the Cape, inspired me most in the creation of my practical work. I will also investigate conceptions of slavery through history of art and representation. This will include cases where slaves were marginalised and a few where they were given some own rights. These cases where slaves were afforded a small degree of power will be semiotically interpreted to provide a context within which I can discuss my own work, *The Shackle Collection*, as a visual representation of the hybrid effect<sup>45</sup> of the master-slave relationship. In this capacity the discussion will also serve as a critical response to that relationship in the arena of

---

<sup>44</sup> Such as the work of Schoeman, (2007) and (2001) as well as Ross (1983) and Giliomee & Mbenga (2007).

<sup>45</sup> As Bhabha delineates in (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 35).

contemporary jewellery art.

Investigating the work of artists such as Fred Wilson (in a global context), Andrew Putter (on a South African scale) and myself (in the South African contemporary jewellery art sphere) may answer my original problem statement<sup>46</sup>. In addition, I will critically discuss examples of the aesthetics of bondage applied in popular culture, fashion and favoured sexual practices. This will provide background as to how the master-slave relationship has been interpreted in popular culture. These examples will only be investigated insofar as they are relevant to the establishment of the master-slave relationship. To an extent, I will try to ascertain whether individuals who appropriate these symbols in a popular culture sphere are aware of the discourses of oppression underlying it. And if they are, to what purpose do they appropriate these symbols. A few cases exist in which the relationship has been re-presented as 'fashionable' or 'slavery-chic'. Mostly, these cases have been critiqued extensively in public and media outrage. Also, bondage as a sexual practice has been brought to the attention of the general public through books such as the trilogy *Fifty Shades of Grey* by author E. L. James.

In the quote below Jennifer González (2008: 119) describes the work of Fred Wilson as 'metonymic'<sup>47</sup>:

All of his works rely upon the metonymic relations between artifacts and the larger world they signify, as well as a sophisticated understanding of the rhetorical use of architectural spaces in the construction of ideologies of inclusion and exclusion. His iconoclastic approach may appear cavalier to some, but to others it is nothing less than an indispensable activist gesture. It is perhaps best to understand the installations as forms of serious play, ironic and self-conscious about every detail but deeply concerned with the real-world consequences of racial injustice (González 2008: 119).

In my research I will investigate the reasons why an object can display such a

---

<sup>46</sup> My primary problem statement is: In which ways did the cuff and the collar illustrate power and oppression in the seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope? A number of secondary problem statements have been deduced from this primary statement. These will also be answered.

<sup>47</sup> 'Metonymic' is defined as the substitution of a name of an attribute or adjunct for that of the thing meant. For example *suit for business executive*. (*The New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2010. Sv. 'metonymic').

metonymic character in terms of the physical collar and cuff and the mental collar and cuff (reiterating punishment and governing). I will also discuss the collective effect these physical and mental objects had on the oppression of slaves as it became established practice at the Cape from 1658.



### 3.2 The Beginnings of Slavery at the Cape in 1658

In this section I briefly describe the circumstances in which the first large ‘consignment’ of slaves was brought to the Cape in 1658. Jan van Riebeeck, who had spent some time in the East before being stationed at the Cape, had some previous knowledge of slavery. For this reason, he understood what an asset productive slave labour could be for the Company at the Cape. He continued to write to the Gentlemen XVII, on the matter of slavery, until he received a satisfactory answer.

That you may not be at a loss what to do when such a large number of slaves is suddenly brought to you from the West Coast, we have provided you with sufficient provisions shipped in the two yachts. (...)

As a large number of casks will be required to carry water for the slaves, we did not like to send you any empty, but filled them with flour and barley. (...)

You are to order from India some clothing for the slaves; from us you receive some coarse cloth to protect them against the cold.

Eighty or a hundred slaves may be kept by you at the Cape, the rest are to be sent to Batavia with the various ships after having been thoroughly refreshed at the Fort. The best and the strongest are to be sent, the weak ones, should there be any, you are to keep back for yourselves.

You are to treat the slaves well and kindly, to make them the better accustomed to and well disposed towards us; they are to be taught all kinds of trades, that in course of time the advantage of such instruction may be beneficial to yourselves, and a large number of Europeans excused. They are also to be taught agriculture, as it would be too great an expense to feed such a lot of people from Holland or India. You are therefore to arrange things so that you have a large quantity of [local] grain on hand when the slaves arrive, in order to feed them and to save the provisions which we have sent you and which you are to forward to India. (Schoeman 2007: 55).

Even though it would still be more than a year before the first slaves arrived, this letter is a good indication of how the Company planned to treat the slaves and how they were already using the global slave trade to their advantage. Schoeman (2007) elaborates

how the Dutch East Indiaman, the *Amersfoort*, was the first vessel to bring a large shipment of slaves to the Cape. Robert Ross writes in *Cape of Torments* (1983: 11) that these slaves “had come originally from Angola, and had been captured from the Portuguese off the coast of Brazil”. The *Amersfoort* was not a dedicated vessel for the transportation of slaves, consequently the conditions were atrocious and many slaves died during the journey. The remaining slaves that arrived at the Cape were mostly children, as remarked by Van Riebeeck, “who will be of little use for the next 4 or 5 years” (Schoeman 2007: 56).

The first ‘useful’ shipment of slaves arrived on the *Hasselt* on 6 May 1658. On board were 228 slaves, and according to Schoeman (2007: 60), “Van Riebeeck was (...) considerably better satisfied with the quality of this consignment, which he described as “an exceptionally fine, strong and lively lot, (...) and unlike the slaves from Angola, many of those from Guinea seem to have kept their own names, and this gives them a certain limited identity and individuality (...) Jajenne, Houwj, Gegeima or Cattibou.”

Although it proved to be exceptionally difficult to run away from the post at the Cape and successfully stay away, in his book *Cape of Torments*, Dr Robert Ross writes about the very first incident in: “[A]s in the new world, the first large group of slaves to be imported to the Cape included the first to run away. In 1655, only three years after the foundation of the colony, one of the few slaves already at the Cape ran away and was never heard of again” (Ross 1983: 11). Some of these incidents will be described below to contextualise the occurrences in which slaves were punished and restrained and were enforced by the collar, cuff and chain impediments. These events may give insight into the master-slave relationship and illustrate the circumstances on which *The Shackle Collection* is based. The title of the collection is based in this context of resistance and punishment as a metaphor for power and oppression.



### 3.3 Defiance/Resistance and Punishment

From my research I deduce that the circumstances into which the slaves at the Cape had to assimilate were dire. Even though it would have been near impossible to accomplish the slaves might have thought that there were still prospects of returning home (especially the Angolan slaves whose country neighboured this one). They were stripped of any familial ties, even spousal ties, possessions, their names, religion, tradition, and they could not speak the language. If an identity is indeed built on these factors, then it can be argued that the slaves were stripped of their identity. This could have been the reason why many of them risked their lives in running away – they must have felt as though they had nothing to lose. Despite brutal punishment, some of them attempted their escape several times. Slaves were an expensive commodity, so severe measures were taken to see that the Company did not lose their valuable ‘assets’ and in the end, money (Schoeman 2007: 69).

Ross provides an investigative account of the attempts of Cape slaves to improve their lives by taking actions which their masters did not sanction (Ross 1983: 3). Ross suggests that the most obvious problem for historians who try to prove that there was resistance at the Cape is the absence of a large-scale rebellion. He explains that a lack of rebellion does not mean that the slaves conceded to their conditions. They expressed their discontent in many ways, “but above all by deserting” (Ross 1983: 3). Ross continues to explain that his work is about struggle and conflict at the Cape. The people who were engaged in this struggle were the masters and the slaves.

The masters were attempting to implement an aggressive, conservative policy. They hoped to maintain and improve the current order of exploitation, for the betterment of their domination and profit. Against them, the slaves were struggling to counter this continual offensive and thereby to improve their personal lots (Ross 1983: 5).

Karl Schoeman sketches a picture of the angst of the Europeans at the time. Living in a slave society could not have been easy: cohabiting with a group of people who were

hostile to say the least, and with only a small police force to enforce order. Schoeman describes the development of the Cape as a refreshment station to the VOC and how the conditions improved, even though “the atmosphere was one of constant tension and fear, where arson and desertion were possible at any moment”. He also writes that the white population could only maintain its control by unrelieved vigilance and severe punishment (Schoeman 2007: 266).

The history of the slaves at the Cape is not known to be well documented. The acquisition, sale and living conditions of the slaves who were the property of the Company, and resided at the Fort and later the Slave Lodge were well documented, though. According to Schoeman (2007: 267) the “private” slaves that belonged to the free burgers or the company officials were only documented when they committed some kind of crime or “misdemeanour”:

Only then was further information obtained about them, their own statements recorded or incidental details about their lives preserved. With few exceptions it is only in legal documents that the voices of the slaves may still be heard, albeit in muffled and distorted form (Schoeman 2007: 267).

Uncovering the hidden and oppressed history of peoples (such as the slaves at the Cape), and realising that their stories were only documented when they resisted the powers that were, served as the inspiration for my contemporary art jewellery practice. I used symbols of bondage and punishment to represent these incidents of resistance. It became my goal to reveal these occurrences through my research for my practical work. I attempt to recreate the hybrid product of colonialism, domination and slavery using versions of historical symbols at the Cape and symbols of power, (the ruff, as described in the first chapter to this study and the shackle as described in this chapter). In this way I use my art practice to represent history alternatively and in a critical way. Through this representation I aim to create a relevant visual aesthetic that is fresh and provocative, that lures viewers into having a closer look and then produces new insight and meaning.

Although the company officials at the Cape were responsible for the daily organisation and ruling of the colony, it was the two groups of immigrants — those who were free

and those in bondage — who determined the character of the colony (Giliomee & Mbenga 2007: 45). The Cape of Good Hope was a slave society from the start. According to Giliomee and Mbenga (2007: 47) it was not the kind of society where slave labour was just another choice; it was a slave society in every aspect — in the labour market, economy, the judiciary system, family life and the church — the entire community was based on a slave society. In the words of Giliomee and Mbenga (2007: 47) “the model of master and slave became the model for all other relationships” [Own translation]. As the Cape was so dependent on the slaves for the general backbone of their society, the dynamics of master and slave became the archetype of the kind of dynamics or relationship the Europeans had with anyone they encountered at the Cape. This relationship, even though the racial and cultural boundaries at the Cape became more blurred<sup>48</sup>, became the benchmark on which the cultural, as well as the political system of South Africa was based.

### 3.3.1 Absconding or ‘drosting’ and its consequences

The betterment of one’s circumstances remains a basic human instinct<sup>49</sup>. Some of the slaves must have felt like they had no alternative but to abscond in order to improve their life quality. The next image is an example of the *plakkaat* or poster that was published in the local newspaper when a slave *drosted* or absconded. Details about the defining features of the slave were included, as well as the languages the slave spoke, together with information about their present owners and previous owners and a reward was always offered.

Ross (1983: 11) describes the first runaway slaves. The *drosting* happened just after the first Angolan slaves were brought to the Cape on the *Amersfoort* in 1658. According to him seven slaves — five men and two women — left the Cape and headed

---

<sup>48</sup> The racial and cultural boundaries at the Cape became blurred because the Europeans had several relationships with slaves, the local population and other immigrants.

<sup>49</sup> See also Agrawal and Sharma’s writing on the term that Abraham Maslow coined “Metamotivation” (Agrawal & Sharma 1977: 266). They explain how better circumstances are required for self-actualisation to become possible. Therefore one can deduce that no process of self-actualisation for the slaves at the Cape was allowed to happen.



**GEDROST,**  
*Zedert de maand Maart 11, (zonder  
 eenig aanleidende oorzaak)*

**E**en Slaven Jonge, van de Onderget (2 maanden te voren ter goedet trouw van den Chirurgyn *L. H. Richter*, voor goed gekogt) gen. *Samuël*, gebortig van *Mofambique*, oud omtrent 25 jaar, van een gematigde lengte, voornamentlyk kenbaar door 't sterke rood, waar mede het wit zyner oogen aangedaan is. Hy spreekt de Eng., Holl. en Portugesche Taalen. Deze Jongen, door zyn voorige Eigenaar by *Mejuffr. de Wed. Ley* verhuurd geweest zynde, heeft toen de dienst van *Doodgraver* gedaan.

Die gem. Jongen ontdekt, en in een der *Coloniale Gevangenissen* bezorgt, zal behalven 't gewoone vanggeld, een præmie van 25 Rds. ontfangen.

*Kaapstad den 19 Sept. 1809.*  
**J. C. VAN SCHOOR,**  
*Wed. Schindeler.*

Figure 3.1: A depiction of a droster plakkaat at the Cape. Slave Lodge Museum.  
 (Photo: Carla Kruger)

north. It was established that the initiative must have been taken by the eldest among them, and that the absconding slaves shared a common language and origin in Angola.

The other Angolans described them as 'up-country cannibals' ... A few days later they were reported by the Khoikhoi to have been seen on the coast in the direction of Saldanha Bay, but thereafter they disappeared from the sight of their short-time masters, and thus from the historical records. Maybe they were incorporated into, for instance, the Nama, or — it is not entirely impossible — found their way back to Angola. It is more likely, however, that they were starved to death on the beach, or were killed by the Khoisan. Their escape served as an inspiration for many other slaves in the as-yet miniscule colony at the Cape of Good Hope. Throughout the rest of that winter slaves continued to desert in large numbers (Ross 1983: 11).

In the years of slavery the VOC imported the slaves in such a manner that a group rarely shared a common interest and stayed together. Possibly, the slaves were scattered about for this very reason, because once they found common ground, a sense of community could have been created. This would have made them a stronger force of resistance. The history of slavery at the Cape largely implies that little sense of community existed among those in bondage. The fact that no unification existed among the slaves; together with their dismal living circumstances and prospects, resulted in the fact that slaves at the Cape rarely reproduced (Schoeman 2007: 16). For this reason, the VOC had to keep a steady stream of importing in order to supply the demand for slaves at the Cape.

Ross (1983: 12) continues to write that this first sign of rebellion inspired many of the slaves. By the end of August, a total of twenty-eight slaves were still at liberty, most of them belonging to free burghers. These free burghers would subsequently be in debt to the company, as these slaves were provided to them on a loan basis at first to help them on their farm and promote successful farming for the Company's prospects. At that time, the slave desertion reached such a level that some of the free burghers even returned their slaves to the Company for fear of them absconding. It was the responsibility of the free burghers to keep their slaves from *droosting*. A free burgher whose slaves *drosted* would owe almost as much as the worth of his farm to the VOC. The burghers implored the Company to help them in this regard and shortly after, new regulations were introduced to prevent *droosting*. "The slaves continued to escape,

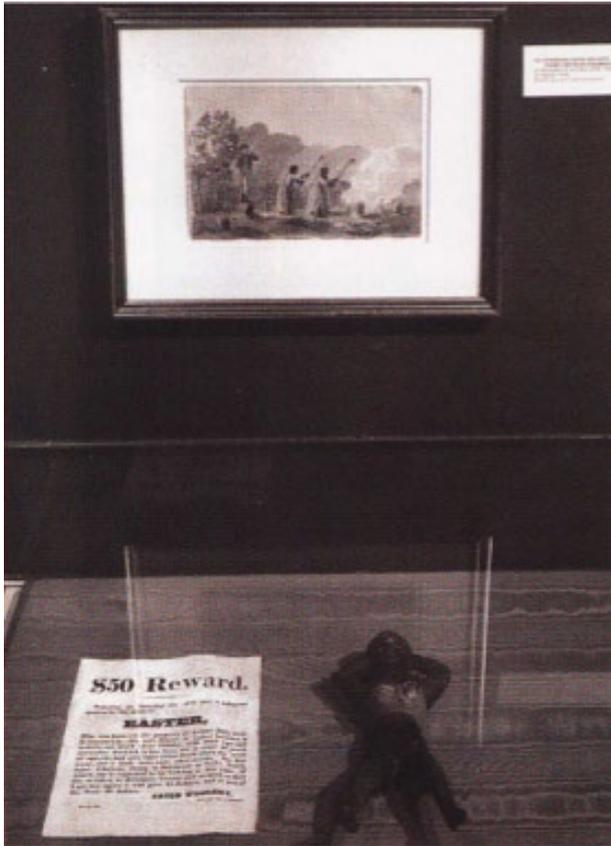


Figure 3.2: An installation view of Fred Wilson's "Easter" in *Mining the Museum*, 1992. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore (González 2008: 90).

despite the fact that the Council of Policy ordered that all adult men belonging to the Company should be locked in chains and allowed the burghers to do the same with their slaves” (Ross 1983: 12).

Before I describe the conditions in which the slaves were forced to wear iron shackles, I would like to discuss the first installation by Fred Wilson that is applicable in this context. This installation was part of his *Mining the Museum* (1992) exhibition in Baltimore. Wilson’s work is presented here in this study to show how elements of bondage have influenced artists on a global scale to investigate practices of marginalisation in history.

Jennifer A. González is an associate professor at the University of California’s History of Art and Visual Culture Department. She edited *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (2008). Here she analyses the contribution of Fred Wilson’s work in the chapter “Fred Wilson: Material Museology”. She writes that he uses “explicit juxtapositions to explore the violent relations between slaves and their masters, the disciplinary, sexual, and psychological abuse that forms a part of the legacy of human relations in much of the United States” (González 2008: 88). She continues to write about his *Mining the Museum* installation in 1992 where “he used eight adjoining rooms to unravel an unorthodox and unflattering narrative of Maryland’s past, emphasising the period in which Africans were enslaved but making links to more recent history” (González 2008: 84). She describes one of his works “Easter” (Figure 3.2) which references posters published for slaves who have absconded and the violence that followed desertion in the global slavery institution:

Copies of reward notices for runaway slaves hung on the walls with phrases in the text highlighted: “stutters a little”, “leg which is a little crooked from having been once broken”, “a scar on the back of his hand”, “hesitates when spoken to”, “ruptured and wears a truss”. The bodily traumas suffered by these runaways testified to their brutal treatment and simultaneously produced those identifying marks that might have lead eventually to their recapture. Another reward notice, for twenty-two-year-old “Easter”, a runaway female “mulatto”, was placed in a glass case beside an iron bootjack from the 1880s that took the form of a scantily clad dark-skinned woman. Called “Naughty Nelly”, the bootjack woman had legs spread wide to hold the heel of the boot. To complete this display, Wilson included the watercolour *An Over-seer Doing His Duty, Sketched*



Figure 3.3: An example of shackles and chains used at the Cape. Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town  
Photo: Carla Kruger).

*from Life near Fredericksburg* (Benjamin H. Latrobe, 1798), depicting a white man wearing boots, watching two barefooted slave women working in the field (González 2008: 91).

In her analysis of Wilson's work, González (2008: 91) explains as follows: "[W]hat emerged from these historically researched and carefully juxtaposed displays was the overwhelming sense of the complex ideological intersection of power and violence with high culture and the fine arts that allowed for, and depended on, a slave economy to survive".

The way in which González (2008: 96) writes how Wilson uses these symbols of bondage to point out that "a point of view can be so complete that you don't even begin to think of other ways of seeing things", is what I aim to investigate when I discuss the Eurocentric tools<sup>50</sup> which were used to disrupt accepted norms and standards. These critical disruptions are also relevant to my own practical work and the context in which it is situated.

### 3.3.2 In chains: Bondage as a precaution to desertion and resistance at the Cape of Good Hope, 1658

Immediately following the institution of slavery at the Cape, the slaves were ordered to be put in chains to keep them from absconding. Karel Schoeman describes the circumstances surrounding the first institution of chains at the Cape in his publication *Early slavery at the Cape* (2007).

By the end of August [1658] the number of fugitive slaves still at large had reached 28, and it was feared that they could multiply, 'having about a third of their women with them', and so become a serious threat to the small colony. It was therefore announced on 28 August that the blacksmith had been ordered to make enough chains for all the Company slaves, 'except some very old and sickly men, the females and the children', and also to provide the freemen everywhere, on application, with chains for that purpose in order to prevent further desertion.' This was duly done, but shortly afterwards 14 of the Company's slaves, men and women, were reported to have absconded

---

<sup>50</sup> These tools include practices of 'Othering', hybridity, naturalisation, stereotyping and dualism as set out in the theoretical framework of this study.

‘notwithstanding the fact that each had a chain on his leg with an iron ball at the end’, while others succeeded in breaking their chains, so that the links had to be made thicker. ‘The slaves that are young and strong are very apt to run away,’ Van Riebeeck reported to Batavia early in 1659, ‘so that we keep [them] in chains, who are accordingly hardly able to do half work’ (Schoeman 2007: 69).

The physical, as well as mental bonds the Europeans enforced upon the slaves were all delicately designed to work together to keep the slaves subdued and not provoke resistance. Ross (1983) explains this in the quote below:

Although slaves regularly threw off the bonds their masters had placed on them, colonial society was so organized as to minimize the possibility, or the risk, that this would happen. Institutions were developed by the slave-owner to contain and control slave obstreperousness<sup>51</sup>. In other words, the power structures of colonial society, both at a formal and informal level, were designed and utilized to ensure the maintenance of the social order (Ross 1983: 29).

Here, the writings by Tony Fluxman (2004: 5) about the oppressed are relevant. He writes in *Coordination, Ideology and Oppression* about the the idea that there is “a certain approach to the question of political power, namely that power can be effectively maintained by a state with a modicum of repressive force.” He proposes that by focussing the oppressor’s limited coercive resources on surveillance, the would-be conspirators, “can be easily detected and suppressed with relatively few resources” (Fluxman 2004: 5).

By concentrating effective force on isolated groups of subversives the state can prevent revolt from becoming large enough to threaten the regime. Let us call this account *simple power*. There are reasons to doubt that simple power is a satisfactory description of the way most regimes maintain their rule. Power seems a much more complex process, involving a variety of different functions which need to be implemented at many different levels. Maintaining law and order, for one, requires that a number of officials perform a variety of duties (Fluxman 2004: 5).

In *Early slavery at the Cape* Schoeman (2007) writes about the slaves’ role in the Khoekhoen wars. When it became apparent that the slaves hated the Khoekhoen as

---

<sup>51</sup> Obstreperousness is defined as ‘difficult to control’ (*The New Oxford American Dictionary* 2010. Sv. ‘obstreperousness’). These cases of ‘obstreperousness’ and resistance are the ones I find most interesting in this study as examples of disruptions of the accepted power structure at the Cape.

much as the white people did, the Company had weapons made for the slaves. However, when it became known that the slaves had intended to join the Khoekhoen, those weapons were confiscated and the male slaves put in chains once again. Schoeman stated that “This has been done so as to prevent such a loss to the Company, for should these sturdy and audacious people link up with our enemies, they would be able to cause more mischief and damage than a hundred times as many Hottentots. Moreover, they would give the Hottentots too much instruction in warfare, since some of them were in Guinea at the time of the European war there” (Schoeman 2007: 82).

When ways to subvert the relationship of bondage are investigated, another installation by Fred Wilson needs to be taken into account. González (2008: 85) writes that in the exhibition *Mining the Museum* (1992), Wilson continues to “use the material culture of the landowning classes and installed one of his more powerful juxtapositions”.

“Metalwork 1793-1880” grouped Baltimore repoussé-style silver vessels with a single, oxidized pair of iron slave shackles (figure below). Iconic of the interdependence of slave labor and a luxury economy, the visual contrast of fine silver craftsmanship and crude ironwork, as well as the position of the abject slave shackles amid the tall goblets and elegant decanters, implied the vast gulf dividing the subjects of Maryland’s past. Because museum collections have typically been composed of the objects belonging to the ruling class and the wealthy elite (who have comprised the museum’s audience as well), the material culture of the working class, and certainly of the slave class, would never be — indeed had never been — shown side by side with such signs of bourgeois privilege. The unlikely but felicitous category “metalwork” encompassed both silver and iron (González 2008: 85).

González (2008: 87) writes that Wilson calls attention to the ideological function of an institution that has traditionally kept such objects apart, through the simple pairing of silver goblets and slave shackles. In an interview with the artist he commented: “As I see it, juxtaposition is one way of unlocking [history] without a didactic tone<sup>52</sup> — allowing the objects to speak to each other. I feel that there is a dialogue between objects — sometimes subtle dialogue, sometimes pronounced dialogue, depending on

---

<sup>52</sup> Here Wilson relies on the Metonymic characteristics of these objects, as mention earlier in this chapter.



Figure 3.4: Fred Wilson, "Metalwork 1793-1880" in *Mining the Museum*, 1992.

Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore

(Photo: Jeff Goldman)

(González 2008: 86).

how diverse the objects are and depending on who is seeing them, too” (González 2008: 87).

In the same sense that Wilson investigates the process of museum exhibition and its discourse in his work, I aim to investigate in my own work the practice of history documentation at the Cape and its consequences in the marginalisation of slaves. The same way in which much of the history of the Dutch was kept rigorously, the history of the slaves was expressly ignored. Remaining records deal only with punishment, bondage, sales and baptism. Every one of these was enforced by the Eurocentric ruling powers. With their identities stripped away, all that remained to symbolise the slaves and their struggle were the physical shackles they wore.

González (2008: 87) continues to write about the approach to history recording and museum display in the Western sense:

That when a museum decides to display one object as decorative art and another as historical artefact, it does not merely establish a hierarchy of aesthetic values; it also limits contact between such objects and thereby restricts the stories such objects tell together. If, as Gaston Bachelard has suggested, ‘the hidden in men and the hidden in things belong in the same topoanalysis’, then any archive also serves as a topological map of human relations, producing its own geography of concealment in the process of preservation (González 2008: 87).

It is González’s notion of “hierarchies of aesthetic values” as a Eurocentric practice that I also try to critique with my work *The Shackle Collection*. By putting objects together that had not previously been paired visually, I thus aim to reconcile this “topological<sup>53</sup> map of human relations” that González (2008: 87) mentioned above.

### 3.3.3 Punishments at the Cape

I will not arbitrarily use objects of punishment or torture as influence on my practical work *The Shackle Collection*; I only use objects of constraint. Incorporating physical punishment and translating themes of torture into my contemporary jewellery

---

<sup>53</sup> ‘Topology’ is defined as the way in which constituent parts are interrelated or arranged. (*The New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2010. Sv. ‘topology’).

represent a different sphere of study. Although I cannot predict or dictate how my work should be perceived, it was not my intention to recreate objects of torture. My work will only contain nuances of constraint as reference to and critique of the practice of slavery at the Cape in the seventeenth century.

There are several history sources that discuss in detail the brutal punishments doled out at the Cape in the seventeenth century. I base my brief outline of the punishments used by the Europeans as another tool to govern control at the Cape on Dr. Roberts Ross's findings. He writes, for example, that "[t]hey (the slaves) were controlled by the massive use of judicial force" (Ross 1983: 2).

It is true that at the Cape the slave-owners themselves were forbidden to punish their slaves beyond a certain degree. They could only employ what was appropriate for 'domestic correction'. The slaves could even enter complaints with the central government when they considered this norm to have been exceeded. The government of the Dutch East India was concerned to maintain the monopoly of force in its own hands. This did not mean that the slaves were able to escape from the rigours of exceedingly vigorous punishment. They could be sent by the owners to the 'fiscaal' (the public prosecutor and head of police) or to the local magistrate to be flogged or to work on the treadmill, more or less at their owner's discretion (Ross 1983: 2).

As Schoeman mentioned earlier, the force available at the Company's disposal for governing its subjects, constituted the minority population at the Cape in the early years. They governed by using mental techniques of oppression (also see Fluxman [2004] above) as well as 'draconian'<sup>54</sup> punishments.

For more serious offences they were subject to a legal system that exacted punishments of the utmost barbarity. Slaves convicted of theft were likely to be hanged. Those who had murdered other slaves or Khoikhoi would be broken on a wheel, with the 'coup de grace'<sup>55</sup>. Killing a white would elicit the same

---

<sup>54</sup> The white population could maintain its control only by unrelieved vigilance, severe discipline and draconian punishments, alternating with sporadic outbursts of senseless violence and cruelty. (Schoeman, 2007:266) 'Draconian', within the context of law and their application, is defined as 'excessively harsh and severe.' (*The New Oxford American Dictionary* 2010. Sv. 'draconian')

<sup>55</sup> A 'Coup de Grâce' is defined in the *New Oxford American Dictionary* (2010) as 'a final blow or shot given to kill a wounded person or animal'.

punishment but without the coup de grace, and in particularly violent cases this would be preceded by tearing eight pieces of the unfortunate slave's flesh away with red-hot pincers. When the victim was the slave's own master, even this was not enough. The condemned man would be impaled on a stake driven up his anus and left to die. If he were lucky, he would become unconscious in about two days (Ross 1983: 2).



### 3.4 The Shackle Collection

The context of this chapter, which deals with the beginning and enforcement of slavery at the Cape, provides the background to the design of my work in *The Shackle Collection*. This background also provides a basis for the critical discussion of this series. The aesthetics and functions of this collection are inspired by themes of bondage, power and the inscription of European metal artefacts and slave collars. The effect is a visual representation of the hybrid effect of colonialism and slavery as defined by Bhabha (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 35). This representation is produced by juxtaposing the various semiotic symbols of the dualistic master/slave relationship (As defined by Plumwood<sup>56</sup>).

During the design process of The Shackle Collection I was actively searching for those moments I discovered in my historical research where the boundaries between the master-slave relationship became blurred. Examples of what inspired my work include: when a slave succeeded in running away, or when a master showed empathy or even love toward a slave or a slave or former slave was elevated to a position of power. Armosyn van die Kaap, a manumitted slave who became matron of the Slave Lodge at the Cape, serves as an example of the latter. She is a prominent ancestor to many South African families. Although such a slave might never have climbed the social ladder to the top, such mild forms of slave empowerment inspired me to create the pieces in this collection. There are not many such case studies available (and when there are they are lacking in details) in historical records, so most of *The Shackle*

---

<sup>56</sup> (Plumwood 1993: 42y )



Figure 3.5: *Sketch for Hard and Soft.*

Carla Kruger. 2013.

Pencil on Fabriano.



Figure 3.6: *Hard and Soft – the design process.*

Carla Kruger. 2013.

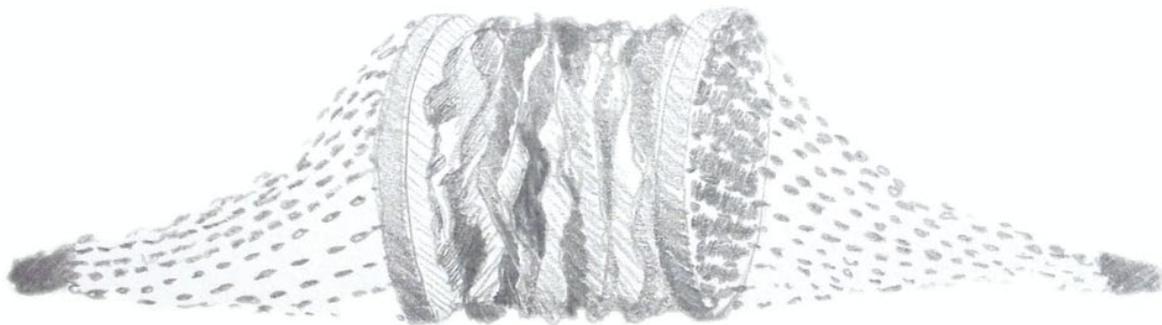


Figure 3.7: *Hard and Soft – the design process.*  
Carla Kruger. 2013.



Figure 3.8: *Hard and Soft*.

Carla Kruger. 2013.

Collar necklace. Chinese Dupion silk, sterling silver, oxidised.

(Photo: Carla Kruger)



Figure 3.9: *Hard and Soft*.

Carla Kruger. 2013.

Collar necklace. Chinese Dupion silk, sterling silver, oxidised.

(Photo: Carla Kruger)

*Collection* is once again (as with *The Ruff/Rough Collection*) based on a fictitious ‘what if’ scenario.

#### 3.4.1 Hard and Soft

“Hard and Soft” is the piece that visually encapsulates both opposites of the dualistic master/slave relationship in one juxtaposed piece of contemporary jewellery that aims to visualise the hybrid nature of a colonised society (such as the Cape in the seventeenth century). The arena of contemporary jewellery today allows me, as an artist in this field, to use past conceptions of jewellery in history as a platform on which to base my work. Liesbet den Besten (2011) describes very accurately the role of contemporary jewellery in the art world today.

A person who is engaged in contemporary jewellery, like me, has to explain an awful lot. For instance, that you are not a maker ... or that one can indeed be professionally involved with jewellery as an art historian, or that there exists another type of jewellery rather than the regular stuff most people wear. You have to explain that there are jewellers across the world, graduated from art academies, who create this other kind of jewellery. And how their work differs from commercial or precious jewellery because it is an artistic expression, and that its value is not determined on the material it is made of (Den Besten 2011: 6).

For the purpose of my own artistic expression, I have researched the way in which well-spoken artists<sup>57</sup> have approached the practice of presenting that which you are criticising in juxtaposition with that which you wish to unveil. In order to provide precedence for the platform in which my work can be discussed I investigated Putter and Wilson’s technique of using fiction to critique stereotypes and marginalisation in their work.

Figure 3.8 and 3.9 displays the piece “*Hard and Soft*”. In my previous series (*The Ruff Collection*) the ruff was interpreted as a power object, while it simultaneously merged the aesthetic with slave and traditional Khoekhoen aesthetic detail (found in their traditional dress and adornment). This resulted in the creation of pieces that emulate a

---

<sup>57</sup> Andrew Putter in the South African context, and Fred Wilson on a global scale.

‘what might have been’ scenario. *The Shackle Collection*, however, uses the same approach but — to a certain degree — the aim of the pieces is more about empowering slaves than disempowering masters.

The piece “*Hard and Soft*” was inspired by the manumitted slave Armosyn van die Kaap. She gained her freedom and became matron of the Slave Lodge. In essence, she came from both worlds. The piece tries to represent this fact both semiotically and symbolically. The piece of ruff in the middle was recreated in a contemporary way with authentic material, namely Chinese Dupion silk. This represents the ‘masters’ aspect of her identity. The chain mail pulling on either side of this fragile piece of fabric symbolises the remnants of her slave history and other prejudices that might still have hindered her career. The chain is sewed to the fabric in such a way that the boundaries between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ are softened. The softening of boundaries was most likely never part of Armosyn van die Kaap’s real life. However, as a work of art, in the context of using fiction to undermine accepted norms and narratives, it might present a version of ‘what might have been’ (if slaves were indeed afforded a level of equal power, and had their histories not been marginalised).

For me, the merging of two binary opposites — the symbol of the master (the ruff) and the slave (the chain) — symbolises the blurring of the line between the master and slave in the master-slave relationship. It signifies a melancholic utopia. Melancholic in the sense that when one looks at the piece, and one starts to deduce its meaning, one realises that what you are looking at is indeed something that is lost, a lost opportunity to mend hierarchies and relationships passed by.

The context (and theory) in which this piece should be read has been concurrently discussed in this study. Although the artist cannot control how their work is perceived, the previously discussed issues in this chapter can be referenced as influenced in my work that has been critically translated within the milieu of contemporary art jewellery. These pieces should not be perceived as a mere re-telling of history. On the contrary, I hope they invoke emotions that may start to provoke critique in questioning the history (and the history construction process) of this country. The work might challenge the



Figure 3.10: "Shackle". Initial design process and eventual design drawings.  
Carla Kruger. 2013.

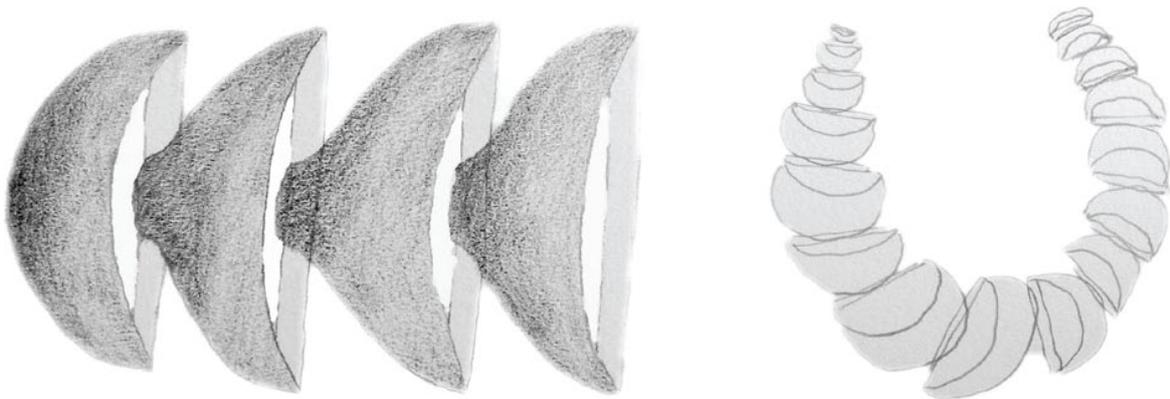


Figure 3.11: "Shackle". Initial design process and eventual design drawings.  
Carla Kruger. 2013.

audience to investigating the dynamics of the root of the situation (the mingling of the first cultures — Europeans, Khoekhoen and slaves from Africa and the East) so that this information might inform relationships and perceptions we have about the different cultures at the Cape today.

### 3.4.2 Shackle

The links in this piece are inspired by slave shackles and constraints the slaves were forced to wear to keep them captive at the Cape. The design is a simplified version of those shackles. I used typical styles of classic European jewellery, and conveyed them by using slave restraint aesthetics. The necklace references a classic strand of pearls or beads. This narrative is used in the same way Fred Wilson uses his installations — presenting that which he is trying to critique in the same context as it was originally found, but by juxtaposing it to that which the object (symbolically) marginalised in the first place. The purpose of the narrative of this work is to possibly undermine the construction of history at the Cape as it has been recorded and published in the past.

Figure 3.13 is an image of “Shackle”. As seen in my research<sup>58</sup>, European symbols of power were often seen in the possession and wearing of precious jewellery, together with owning many slaves. When I recreate this luxury item (a string of beads or pearls) juxtaposed with visual symbols of slave marginalisation, I aim to comment on the fact that the wealth of Europe was built and acquired with the blood and sweat of slaves. In this way I use these aesthetics<sup>59</sup> as inspiration to subjectively blur the lines between symbols of power and oppression using the visual narrative of dualistic relationship between the slave and the master, and hopefully present possible answers to my research question<sup>60</sup> delineated in the introduction to this study. The way in which I use semiotic structures, meanings and symbols in their original context, according to McGowan (in Malpas &

---

<sup>58</sup> As visualised by the possible representations of Maria van Riebeeck in figure 2.5 and 2.7 of this study

<sup>59</sup> The aesthetics of the European string of pearls (as a symbol of power and wealth) juxtaposed against the slave shackle (as a symbol of oppression).

<sup>60</sup> My primary problem statement is: In which ways did the cuff and the collar illustrate power and oppression in the seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope?



Figure 3.12: "Shackle". Design process.  
Carla Kruger. 2013.

Wake 2006: 4) provides the grounds for criticism of these very structures.

Portraying these loaded visual symbols of slavery in a context that is characteristic of the typical European 'fine jewellery' style is not meant to be interpreted as any degree of 'slavery-chic', but rather as a critical visual exploration of the Eurocentric practices discussed in this chapter.



### 3.5 Conclusion

From the historical overview provided, as well as the visual examples, one can deduce that physical cuffs and collars were not the only constraints the masters of the Cape used to make sure their slaves were perceived on the polar opposite of their dualistic relationship of master/slave and self/'Other'. Mental coercion and Eurocentric discourse (using techniques such as stereotyping and 'Othering' to naturalise their imperialistic paradigm), together with oppressive disciplinary techniques — especially the oppression of identity — ensured that the slaves acquiesced in their fate.

As mentioned in the introduction to this study, Giliomee and Mbenga (2007: 45) refer to 'a new society from three continents', which is exactly what the Cape became after 1652. They also describe the situation at the Cape as consisting of four official 'categories' or status groups. A distinction was made between Company servants and free burghers. Then the distinction between these two (free) groups and the slaves. Lastly they distinguish these three groups (the Company, freeburghers and slaves) as outsiders to the natives (Khoekhoen) who the Europeans deemed 'alien' or 'Others'. A person's group status, and not his/her race, colour or religion, determined how (s)he fared in life. These boundaries determined domicile, right of movement, military service and land ownership (Giliomee and Mbenga 2007: 45). In my opinion, these three status groups (whether one was free, in bondage or part of the local Khoekhoen who were later [as a culture] entirely wiped out) determined the level of power one would possess. And this level of power was visually signified by either a white collar (power); a shackle (oppression) or traditional Khoekhoen adornment ('the Other') as shown my



Figure 3.13: "*Shackle*".  
Carla Kruger. 2013.  
Fine silver, sterling silver, oxidised.  
(Photo: Carla Kruger)

investigative visual historical research in this study. In my work I juxtaposed these three signifiers to comment metaphysically on the process of constructing dualistic relationships at the Cape.

The nature of the society at the Cape was defined in terms of group status that was not necessarily determined by race or class, but whether you were a slave or a master. In terms of my problem statement as set out in the introduction to this study, I have answered the question as to how the cuff and the collar influenced art on a global scale (in terms of Fred Wilson's work), as well as the degree of signifying value these articles had on maintaining the power dynamic at the Cape. With my own pieces I aimed to disrupt this dynamic.

In my practical work *The Shackle Collection*, I created contemporary jewellery that aim to represent the hybrid effect or product of colonialist and imperialist discourse as outlined by Bhabha<sup>61</sup>, aimed to deconstruct boundaries of the power/oppression relationship between master and slave. The artist Fred Wilson's practice of critiquing museum installation especially informed this practice. Facts about the history of slavery at the Cape played a role too. The records of the few cases of resistance and other circumventions of accepted power structures and social systems at the Cape are examples and case studies which I personally perceive as metaphors for the hybridisation and deconstruction of binaries. These may provide cause for de-marginalisation of the history and cultures of many of these people who gave their lives and freedom to construct this country — even if it was only for the sake of their ancestors living in this country today.

---

<sup>61</sup> (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 35).



## Chapter 4: Identity Construction and Deconstruction at the Cape



### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will investigate identity construction and deconstruction at the Cape. The Europeans who came to colonise the Cape of Good Hope had to exert and maintain their power through a continuous process of identity construction. This process was executed by means of construction of that identity against what it was not: 'the Other'. Even though Jan van Riebeeck and his company might not have consciously engaged in this process, it is an involuntary action that may be investigated in hindsight with contemporary semiotic theory. I find Kate McGowan's investigation into the workings of semiotics appropriate in this context:

(...) (i) [S]igns function to constitute meaning only within the terms of the system of which they are part; (ii) while all sign systems function according to their own structural principles, they all function nonetheless like language; (iii) all forms of cultural text can therefore be understood as signifying systems, the meanings of which are not fixed for all time but, rather, are open to change. (...) [S]emiotics (hand in hand with structuralism) can be said to have changed the ways in which we are able to engage with the specificities of meanings comprising texts<sup>62</sup>. Again, it can change what it means to read, as well as the practice of reading itself. This obviously has implications for cultural study in that it implies all forms of cultural text are equally rich in meaning and, potentially, sites at which meaning can be contested (Malpas & Wake 2006: 12).

McGowan's argument that texts should be read by relating one sign to another (as that is the only way meaning is produced) is what I have aimed to accomplish in my investigation thus far, as well as in this chapter concerning identity construction. The signs that need to be read together to understand their meaning are the different visual signs and metonymic devices (the collar and the cuff) the Europeans used in their imperialist and colonialist regime at the Cape. In order to visually construct and

---

<sup>62</sup> These 'texts' McGowan discusses here can be anything from art, to photography, to advertisements to film. (Malpas & Wake 2006: 10 - 11)

naturalise a certain order to maintain their power discourse, they created a dualistic relationship between themselves and 'Other'. In this sense their visual signifiers can be read in the construction of this dualism, and may also (according to McGowan) be used as a platform for the contestation of these signs. In the previous two chapters I have discussed my practical work as a representation of this contestation. In this chapter I will investigate the cognitive effects the establishment of the dualistic relationship (between master and slave; self and 'Other') had on all involved<sup>63</sup> at the Cape (and the symbols of these cognitive effects – the mental collar and cuff placed on slaves at the Cape – will be used as inspiration and grounds for discussion for my practical work, *The Soft Steel Collection*).

The slaves who arrived at the Cape were stripped of any notion of identity: their names were replaced by different ones; they were stripped of any familial or spousal bonds and they had to learn a new language (and religion) if they ever hoped to gain their freedom (Schoeman, 2007: 76). According to Schoeman (2007: 166) slaves from the same region “would naturally have communicated in their own tongue”, and in my opinion, this would have been one of the only opportunities to project a degree of identity within the slave community. The only means of transferring some of the history or traditions of their home culture would have been to transfer it orally to their peers and children. These oral storytelling ‘performances’ are described as seminal in the practice of contesting dominant (Eurocentric in the case of the Cape) identity construction techniques in the editorial introduction to the chapter “The Body and Performance” in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader* (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, Hellen: 1995: 322):

Yet in many postcolonial societies oral, performative events may be the principal present and modern means of continuity for the pre-colonial culture and may also be the tools by which the dominant social institutions and discourses can be subverted or repositioned, shown that is to be constructions naturalised within a hierarchised politics of difference (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 322).

In Chapter 1 Andrew Putter’s work has been discussed where he used sound and orally transferred media in his work to contest hierarchical differences in dualistic

---

<sup>63</sup> These include the masters, the slaves and the Khoekhoen at the Cape.

relationships of colonialism and slavery. Fred Wilson's "Justus Engelhard Kuhn" will be discussed in this chapter as he implemented the same technique as Putter in this regard. In the same sense that these oral storytelling devices has been used, the body will also be discussed (in this chapter) as a field for signs and polarities to be discussed and contested. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin also provide relevant insights into the body as cultural signifier<sup>64</sup>:

The body, too has become then the literal site on which resistance and oppression have struggled, with the weapons being in both cases the physical signs of cultural difference, veils and wigs, to use Kadiatu Kanneh's terms, symbols and literal occasions of the power struggles of the dominator and dominated for possession of control and identity. Such struggles have often articulated the further intersections of race with gender and class in the construction of the colonised as subject and subaltern (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 322).



#### 4.2 Stripping the identity of slaves as a power play tactic

The identities of the slaves at the Cape had to be 'wiped clean' for them to become the subservient workforce they needed to be. Any form of unification among them was also discouraged, as this would cause them to unite in revolt. According to my research, I deduce that the VOC at the Cape kept this phenomenon under strict control, so as to minimise the risk of "coordination among the slaves" (Fluxman 2004: 1). If the slaves were lucky their name would contain 'Van Bengalen' — a small remnant of their country of origin. The Company wanted to exert total control over their slaves, who were seen as their property. A person without an identity or a sense of community becomes isolated. For this reason, these tactics were used to ensure total oppression and misuse of human beings. The renaming of slaves was, in my opinion, the cognitive equivalent of constraining them in physical cuffs and shackles. White and Beaudry writes in their article "Artifacts and Personal Identity" (2009: 218) that many slaves were even given collars with the family name inscribed on it — much the same as a

---

<sup>64</sup> As will be discussed in this chapter in terms of Judith Butler's writings in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990).

dog's tag on its collar. Recently, a number of memorials have been erected in honour of these slaves. A few examples follow later in this chapter.

#### 4.2.1 The renaming of slaves

The practice of renaming slaves was probably for practical reasons (Schoeman 2001: 117). Most of the Europeans who lived at the Cape had no previous experience with people from other races or other languages. They might not have been able to pronounce some of the names the slaves brought with them. Yet, the practice of renaming was a dehumanising tool, which tied in with the Eurocentric agenda of the Company to keep the slaves oppressed and in constraints. In this section I will discuss the custom by some owners to inscribe their family names on the collar of their slaves.

In *Armosyn van die Kaap* (2001), Karl Schoeman provides a brief explanation regarding the naming process of slaves. Almost more intriguingly, this process also applied to the slaves who were born to slave and European couplings.

When we speak of slaves it is easy to lose sight of their individuality in their anonymity. Too often they are lost under the label that describes their status. Yet every slave was a human individual with a face and a name. A *slave* is but a slave, an abstraction, but a slave with a name becomes a man, a woman, a child. Hence lists of slave names have an essential and peculiar interest, an actualizing power, that derives from their symbolic intersection with individual existence and social anonymity (Schoeman 2001: 117).

As Schoeman describes above, even just retaining their own name, as a slave, would have afforded them the small degree of power that lies in identity. In the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, a person's first name was considered to be his/her actual name. This was before the 'surname' had any real merit. In the seventeenth century this was still true for most of the population, and this custom followed the Dutch to the Cape. In order to distinguish between individuals with the same name, the father's name was added. Below is an example of the naming of three generations.

En so het Pieter die seun van Cornelis dan as Pieter Corneliszoon of Pieter Cornelisz bekendgestaan, en Pieter se eie seun Cornelis op sy beurt weer as Cornelis Pietersz. Op dieselfde wyse is Pieter se dogter Cornelia Pieters dochter of Cornelia Pietersz genome (...) (Schoeman 2001: 117).

Slaves who were born in freedom back in their country had names from their own cultures, but because slaves were a commodity, the owner owned every right of that slave, and could thus choose to change their name at will<sup>65</sup>. For this reason, the names of slaves were predominantly Dutch or of classical origin:

Algemeen onder die mans was die name Antonie (op verskillende maniere geskryf) en Jan, gevolg deur Titus, Claas, Piet(er), Jacob, Cupido, Coridon, Aron, Abraham, Hannibal, Alexander, David en Thomas, in hierdie volgorde; onder die slavinne het Maria (met variante), Susanna en Sara die meeste voorgekom, naas Nederlandse name soos Lysbeth en dié van klassieke of Portugese oorsprong soos Diana, Angela en Cecilia (Schoeman 2001: 121).

Figures 4.1 to 4.3 show images of slave memorials in the Slave Lodge Museum and on Church Square in Cape Town. The names of the slaves are some of the few details available of their lives — a history that was otherwise overwritten by die European dominator.

Many of the European men took advantage of their control over the female slaves and used them for their sexual needs<sup>66</sup> (Schoeman 2007: 77). Many illegitimate children originated from these occurrences. This will be discussed in some detail in the next subchapter. According to Schoeman (2001), some resistance (or a small scale of revolt on the part of slave women at the Cape) existed in the regard that they were sexually abused.

Company slave women took great pains to drive a genealogical stake into the baptismal records of the colony. They always named their invariably absent

---

<sup>65</sup> The names of the four slaves W.A van der Stel bought in 1699 exemplify the arbitrary naming process. They were named *Januarie*, *Februarie*, *Maart* and *Mei* respectively. In the same way many slaves were also given names of a ridiculing or derogatory nature: *Domingo Aapekint van Madagaskar*, a boy of ten, *Winterboter van Nagapatnam*, *Clapperdop van Koromandel*, *Lang Onderweg van Malabar*, *Bijgeval van Bengalen*, or *Wegesonken*, *Behouden* and *Dikbeen*, all three from Cape Verde. These slaves were all bought by Simon van der Stel in 1698, which is the only reason why their names would be on the record (unless they committed a crime later in life). (Schoeman, 2001:121) The general practice of naming slaves was simply to combine their given name with their place of origin. Those who were born at the Cape would be *Van die Kaap* or *Van de Caab*. When Catharina van Bengalen married Jan Woutersz it is interesting to note that her name was entered into the register in its European form: *Catarina Anthonisz from Salagou in Bengal*. (Schoeman 2001: 122)

<sup>66</sup> This phenomenon will be discussed in section 4.2.2.

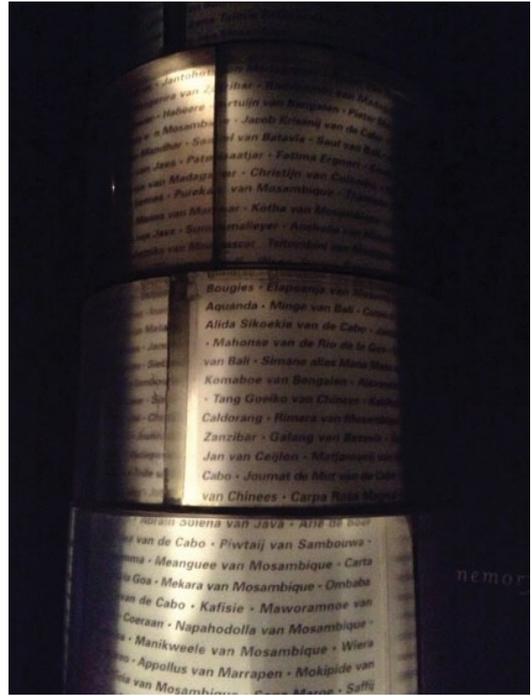
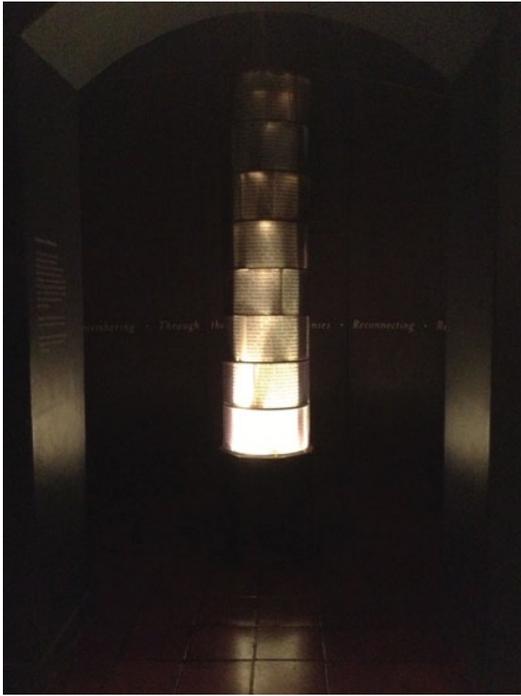


Figure 4.1 & 4.2: Installation of Slave names as a commemoration in the Slave Lodge Museum, Cape Town. (Photo: Carla Kruger)



Figure 4.3: Terms peculiar to the slave history at the Cape. Church Square, Cape Town, Slave Memorial. Granite blocks. (Photo: Carla Kruger)

European lover as the father of their child with an embarrassingly apt patronym. Were the slave women of the Lodge defying the growing racial order by flaunting their European partners? Or were they simply establishing the best possible future in a colony where the advantages increasingly depended on light skin colour? (Schoeman 2001: 122)

Schoeman relays the fact that Professor Hans Heese, however, maintains that the children of slaves were not commonly given the names of the fathers. Heese attains that it was an exception for a child to bear its father's name. In cases where a child had a white father, most entries simply had a note attached that read 'Father unknown Christian' (Schoeman 2001: 122).

As previously mentioned, slaves were sold as property at the Cape. It is also known that slaves were an expensive commodity. They were the responsibility of their masters. The owners took extreme measures to make sure that their property remained just that — their property. Some masters commissioned special collars for their slaves with the family's name inscribed on it. Carolyn White and Mary Beaudry (2009: 218) write in their article "*Artifacts and Personal Identity*": "At its most basic level, the inscription upon everyday objects of names or initials signals ownership, marking an object as the possession of a specific individual."

Lucas (2004:186) notes that an archaeology of colonial identity is largely a study of how [...] subjectivities are constituted in the context of colonialism in terms of quotidian practice and the role material culture plays — through landscapes, buildings and everyday domestic objects. One of the ways in which everyday domestic objects have been deployed in discourses of personal identity in colonial and other contexts is through inscription and marking (cited in White & Beaudry 2009: 218).

White and Beaudry (2009: 218) quote seminal theorist Judith Butler's ideas of identity. They first explain how marks of ownership represent an attempt to secure identity. This means that slave owners inscribed their name on their slaves' collars to claim the slaves as their property (Jones 2004). Then White and Beaudry explain Butler's writings in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) when she writes about the power of an object (or material culture) or inscription to produce identity: "the monogram or name of an individual inscribed on an object creates a relationship between a person and an object that allows a person to both fabricate and to perform

his or her identity as if it were stable and coherent, while in fact it is ‘an enacted fantasy or incorporation’ (Butler 1990: 136)” (cited in White and Beaudry 2009: 218).

Judith Butler, in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) provides a detailed discussion of Julia Kristeva’s (a Bulgarian/French philosopher) feminist writings on the body as a tool in the identity construction process:

The boundary of the body as well as the distinction between internal and external is established through the ejection and transvaluation of something originally part of identity into a defiling otherness. As Iris Young has suggested in her use of Kristeva to understand sexism, homophobia, and racism, the repudiation of bodies for their sex, sexuality, and/or colour is an “expulsion” followed by a “repulsion” that founds and consolidates culturally hegemonic identities along sex/race/sexuality axes of differentiation. Young’s appropriation of Kristeva shows how the operation of repulsion can consolidate “identities” founded on the instituting of the “Other” or a set of Others through exclusion and domination. What constitutes through division the “inner” and “outer” worlds of the subject is a border and boundary tenuously maintained for the purposes of social regulation and control. The boundary between the inner and outer is confounded by those excremental passages in which the inner effectively becomes outer, and this excreting function becomes, as it were, the model by which other forms of identity differentiation are accomplished (Butler 1990: 238 - 239).

It can then be deduced that Butler (through Kristeva) perceives the body as a tool of practices of ‘Othering’ in identity construction. Projecting the ‘self’ body against the ‘Other’ body is an important tool in the identity construction techniques (of the VOC at the Cape) discussed in this chapter. Butler also touches upon the fact that the ‘Self’ is dependant on ‘the Other’ in dualistic relationships<sup>67</sup> (as a method of identity construction), and that this form of identity construction can only successfully take place in a context of domination and eradication of the ‘Other’ identity.

The quote by Plumwood below further illustrates how the ‘self’ (European) is dependant on ‘the Other’ to become that ‘self’:

---

<sup>67</sup> as explained in Plumwood’s writings on dualism as a relation of: “domination inscribed and naturalised in culture and characterised by radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders constructed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, as ruler and ruled, which treats the division as part of the natures of beings construed not merely as different but as belonging to radically different orders or kinds, and hence as not open to change (Plumwood 1993: 47 - 48).

The view of the other as inessential is the master's perspective. The master's view is set up as universal, and it is part of the mechanism of backgrounding that it never occurs to him that there might be other perspectives from which he is backgrounded. Yet this inessentialness which he believes the slave to have in relation to his own essentialness is an illusion. First, the master more than the slave requires the other in order to define his boundaries and identity, since these are defined against the inferiorised other; it is the slave who makes the master a master, the colonised who make the coloniser, the periphery which makes the centre. Second, the master also requires the other materially, in order to survive, for the relation of complementation has made the master dependent on the slave for fulfilment of his needs. But this dependency is also hated and feared by the master, for it subtly challenges his dominance, and is denied in a variety of indirect and direct ways, with all the consequences of repression (Plumwood 1993: 48 - 49).

This explanation by Plumwood links with Butler's theories of how the self can only be demarcated once the 'Other' has been "excreted", but the 'self' cannot wholly be created without the contrast of the 'Other' (Butler 1990: 239).

#### 4.2.2 Female slaves and sexual abuse

The number of men far exceeded that of women at the Cape. As a result, Jan Woutersz and Jan Sacharias married manumitted slaves. For a lack of women, the men started to notice the ample number of female slaves that were imported. Many masters and free burghers took advantage of their position of power and abused these women sexually.

Karl Schoeman gives an account of these first cases of sexual abuse and their effects on the society at the Cape:

The survivors from Angola were mainly children, but among the Guineans there were a number of 'paired' slaves who were regarded by the whites as being man and wife, although it is not known at what stage they were joined in this way. (...) These slave unions had no legal status, however, and could not have given the women concerned much protection against the demands made upon them in a community consisting almost exclusively of unattached white males. Although the attestations which provide evidence in this regard date only from 1660, the situation described must have come into being almost immediately after the arrival of the women from Angola and Guinea (Schoeman 2007: 77).

Schoeman (2007: 77) also relays the story about the land surveyor and two soldiers who went with Van Riebeeck to the house of Gunner Willem [Cornelisz] “whom they found undressed, lying alongside a female slave of the Commander named Maria,” probably a reference to Maria van Bengalen. Schoeman further describes a similar incident in sexual abuse at the Cape colony. A sailor stated that Van Riebeeck, who paid a visit to his farm Bosheuvel, questioned the superintendent, Barend Waendersz, about illicit contact with the female slaves. Below is Schoeman’s rendition of the incident (2007: 77).

‘Has any of your men had anything to do with the female slaves and fructified them?’, and that Barend answered, ‘No, sir.’ That Riebeeck replied, ‘Barend, did you have anything to do in the matter? Tell it freely, no harm is done, it is for the benefit of the Company.’ Barend replied, ‘Yes, sir.’ Riebeeck answered, ‘Then [sic] go to the Fiscal and settle the matter, no harm is done (it is not of any importance).’

These incidents started a type of abuse at the Cape, which represented another form of enforcement of power over the slaves by their owners. The women were disempowered when their owners sexually abused them. The male counterparts of the slave women were left powerless too, since they could not stop the abuse against their women. The fact that these cases were not even considered important is paramount in understanding the constraints these Dutch masters imposed on the slaves at the Cape.

The masters were not the only culprits, though. Leonard Thompson writes in his book *A History of South Africa* (2006: 42): “The Company controlled the slaves in its Cape Town lodge on military lines. The lot of women owned by the company was especially humiliated. To augment the company income, they were encouraged to prostitute themselves to sailors and were made to work alongside men on the most gruelling tasks.”

#### 4.2.3 The emergence of Afrikaans as a means of communication for the slaves

For this study, the most interesting and relevant parts of the slave history are those marked by changes in the community at the Cape due to actions of resistance taken by the slaves themselves. These instances, in my opinion, mark the slaves’ role in

history. I choose to reveal these instances in this theoretical study as well as in my practical work. Another relevant instance is the emergence of the Afrikaans language. It proves relevant here because Afrikaans is what the National Party (the oppressive force during apartheid) declared to be their claim to dominance; to them Afrikaans was a symbol of the Afrikaner 'purity' (Boddy-Evans n.d.). They used this language to enforce oppression upon the nonwhite population (who nowadays constitutes the larger populace in this country). This lasted many years and is still part of this country's history. Many uprisings occurred during the apartheid era as black citizens refused to conform to the apartheid agenda and learn Afrikaans in school<sup>68</sup>.

In a post-apartheid country, it is important to investigate what the signifying power characteristic of the dominating National Party was (in this case I deduce from my research that it was the Afrikaans language). This is for the benefit of deconstructing mistakes of the past to ensure it does not repeat itself in the future. When the power and domination dynamic of this country's history is investigated, one might realise what needs to be accomplished in terms of restitution in this country. Sampie Terreblanche, author of *A History of inequality in South Africa 1652-2002* (2002) presented a lecture at Stellenbosch University's Visual Arts Department on 2 September 2013. Terreblanche is of the opinion that this country will not have any effect on what is supposed to happen in terms of restitution and the equalisation of resources in the foreseeable future.

Within this context, it may be interesting to note that Afrikaans emerged due to the importation of slaves. The language emerged to give them a mode of communication. Any traces of their original culture and tradition they may still have retained shaped the language of Afrikaans into what it is today<sup>69</sup>. 300 years later, this language was used by

---

<sup>68</sup> One such uprising was the Soweto Uprising of June 16 1976. On the website *South African History Online* the author gives a brief explanation of the events of that day: "June 16 marks the commemoration of National Youth Day in South Africa. This is the day the country reflects on the massacre of many innocent school children during the Soweto Uprising of 1976. The response of the organisations in exile can be understood in the context of the events that took place on the day. The students had organised a peaceful march against the *Afrikaans Medium Decree*, issued in 1974, which made it mandatory for black schools to use the Afrikaans language as the medium of instruction in Mathematics, Social Sciences and Geography at the secondary school level" (*South African History Online* n.d.)

<sup>69</sup> It is this 'disruption' of dominant history that I find interesting in my research for this study.

the National Party as a nation building tool; utilising it to differentiate 'the self' from 'the other'. This is ironic, as this language originated because of and thanks to 'the Others' (Ross 1983: 15).

During the past two hundred years, Afrikaans has been used as a major nation building tool for the 'white' population to assimilate themselves against the 'other'. This is a sure sign that Eurocentrism has never truly left this country. The Afrikaans ruling party in the apartheid era forced the nonwhite populace to learn the language in the same way the Dutch forced the slaves to be baptised if they desired their freedom. Dr Robert Ross (1983: 15) explains how Afrikaans emerged with the arrival of the slaves:

Afrikaans emerged, so it can be maintained, not because tendencies already at work were accelerated within the linguistic developments of Dutch, but through a process of creolisation. Dutch was not the first language for so many of those who had to speak it during the first century and a half of the Cape Colony's history. Some of these were Europeans, for the VOC had many Germans and Scandinavians among its employees, but most were slaves and Khoisan. This is not a popular thesis among the white Afrikaners of modern South Africa. H.J.J.M. van der Merwe, for instance, once claimed that, with research, 'it becomes completely clear that Afrikaans originated in and from the spoken language of the whites'. *From* their language, that is incontrovertible, but *in* it? Contact with Europe remained sufficiently intense for the creation of a new language, purely by the principles of natural selection as it were, to be most unlikely in such a short time. The language was modified in becoming the speech of the Asians and Africans, or rather in becoming the medium of communication between master and servant. As such it was, and remains, an expression of the exploitative social relationships of colonial South Africa.

Ross (1983) comments on the origin of the language and its consequences when he writes that Afrikaans is a language created from the interaction of slaves (and Khoekhoen) with Europeans. And so it became a paradigm for the construction of slave culture. "The slave trade had torn the slaves away from their roots in Africa or in Asia, and some new patterns of meaning had to be found in South Africa. The very diversity of the slaves' ethnic origins and the piecemeal nature of the slave trade meant that the processes of acculturation within South Africa had to be particularly speedy. To speak of acculturation, however, does not imply that there was a 'culture' in which the slaves could participate." (Ross 1983: 15).

Karel Schoeman (2007: 248) writes that “the role played by Cape-born women [is important], ‘and this includes manumitted slave women’, in this process of linguistic change, in a limited domestic context of children, household slaves and Khoi servants” (Schoeman 2007: 248). Therefore, it is possible to deduce that Afrikaans emerged and survived due to the nonwhite population. Afrikaans, as a language, is an ideal metaphor for the master-slave relationship during the early history at the Cape. As it is my home language, it was interesting for me to uncover its roots.



### 4.3 Slaves Represented in Western Art

Through the years all slaves have played an important role in all of the history of civilisation, even though they did not receive recognition for their contribution. From the first civilisations, they were the backbone and building blocks on which some of the most successful nations in the world were built. Yet, whenever they were visually depicted they were mostly marginalised to the edges of the canvas or the world of art. As they were largely seen as expensive commodities, they were often included in family portraits only to illustrate the commissioner’s wealth. Fred Wilson once again created an installation that comments on this form of marginalisation.

In this regard, González (2008: 87) expresses her opinion on Wilson’s *Mining the Museum*. She states that Wilson’s attention was focused on already visible but marginal signs, even including, ‘for example, the margins of oil paintings’ (See figure 4.4). González discusses the work “Justus Engelhardt Kuhn” below:

In several of the Maryland Historical Society’s eighteenth-century group portraits of children, white children of the landed class are pictured with black children, probably their slaves. Often barely visible because of the dark tone of the pigments used to paint their skin, the African American children are also depicted in the margins, literally pushed to the edges of the picture frame, gazing admiringly at their masters. To focus attention on these hidden figures, Wilson used a motion sensor, triggered by passing museum visitors, to activate a spotlight and audiotape. For the young black girl who stands at the edge of *The Alexander Contee Hanson Family portrait* (Robert Edge Pine, ca. 1787), a voice



Figure 4.4: *Henry Darnall III*.  
Justus Engelhardt Kuhn. (ca. 1710).  
Oil on canvas  
(González 2008: 89).

asks, “Where is my mother? Who combs my hair? Who calms me when I am afraid?” For a portrait of *Henry Darnall III* (Justus Engelhardt Kuhn, ca. 1710), pictured with his estate and a nameless slave retained by a metal collar around his neck, a voice asks, “Am I your brother? Am I your friend? Am I your pet?” (González 2008: 87).

In the same way in which Andrew Putter used sound (and video) in his work, *Secretly I will love you more*, Wilson uses sound in this installation to enter into a different level of conversation with the audience. González (2008: 71) explains this experience in the quote below:

Sound recording is a frequent device Wilson employs to disrupt the authoritative, familiar, yet repressive sound of silence maintained in galleries and museums. The polite murmur of shuffling feet and quiet contemplation that is the instituted norm is irreverently infiltrated by unlikely sounds of violence, narrative, and talking back. The slightly uncanny, unanticipated emergence of sound from otherwise mute objects produces a strategic, ghosting effect that simultaneously functions as a return of the repressed. By giving voice to the object, the artist also invites the visitor into a pseudodialogue while simultaneously constructing a subject position with which, or against which, the visitor is asked to identify.

In González’s analysis of this work of Wilson’s, she found that his “interrogative interjections” address the familial, emotional, and hierarchical relationships amongst children in a slave economy, offering his own thoughts as a contemporary viewer who identifies with the slave, not the master. (González 2008: 87) Wilson also often used quirky humour or parody in his work to effect emotional responses from the audience. Once he removed the Darnall portrait (Figure 4.4) from the wall where it was usually displayed in the Maryland Historical Society. According to González (2008: 87) “he left behind in its place a small leather dog collar resting against the wall, just where the metal slave collar would have been.”

As mentioned above, slaves were included in many of these portraits to display ownership and wealth. However, the images also reveal the slave as the origin of the ‘gaze’ — from the margins — which guaranteed the status of the master. (González, 2008:88) “With Wilson’s installations, he directly addresses museum visitors, and he brings to the fore the often unconscious processes of identification — or disidentification

— that visitors experience in front of works of art and artifacts. Instead of a narcissistic gesture, the use of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ in *Mining the Museum* invites identification between the viewer and those subjects whose history has been summarily ignored or institutionally erased. It is a radical gesture, not trivial or quaint, to offer first-person status to the slaves in the portraits who remain nameless to this day” (González 2008: 88).

In Pieterse’s chapter on “Otherness is Historical” he writes that most of the time in representing images of Africa and of black people, western popular culture combines them within the framework of comparative historical analysis. “Historical, because a significant feature of representation of others is their historicity, the fact that stereotypes change over time; comparative, in view of the diversity among stereotypes according to their cultural context; and analysis, on the assumption that these variations tend to correlate with modes of domination, and modes of defiance, which differ according to time and place” (Pieterse 1995: 228). Pieterse touches on a very interesting point here, in discussing historical representation of the ‘Other’<sup>70</sup>.

Pieterse also writes in his chapter “Imagery of Eurocentrism” that in many representations of Europe’s relationship with its ‘Other’ (Africa and Asia):

The hierarchical character of this iconography is transmitted by means of a pictorial architecture of power, both blatant and subtle in contrasts of high and low, centre and margin, foreground and background, body languages of dominion and submission, in addition to the symbolic repertoires specific to particular settings. This architecture of power echoes throughout the imagery of White on Black as a set of iconographic codes recurring in the depiction of slavery, missions, colonialism, and up to contemporary advertising (Pieterse 1995: 22 - 23).

The quote above illustrates the construction and perception (in a semiotic deconstruction) of the signs of hierarchies that portray the dualistic relationship of the

---

<sup>70</sup> Taking a look at how black people (not necessarily slaves) are portrayed in art, I found that many exhibitions on this topic were inspired by the multivolume collection *The Image of the Black in Western Art*. According to an article in the *Apollo* magazine by David Bindman (2011: 20) the collection has been published over a period of 50 years (since 1960) and covers 5 000 years of art. The period between the sixteenth and nineteenth century spans three volumes. An abundance of material is available for this period, especially as a result of the burgeoning slave trade. This collection inspired exhibitions such as *Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe* at The Walters Art Museum in 2012.

master and slave at the Cape that I investigate in this chapter.

Holland Cotter (2012) wrote a review of this exhibition in the *New York Times* titled “A Spectrum from slaves to saints”. Here he commented as follows: “[I]n a show that tackles the issue of race head-on, the line between an objective view of the past taken on its own terms and interpretation of it in light of the present can sometimes feel precariously drawn”. Here Cotter warns the reader that this exhibition could have been perceived as tired (no longer a fresh concept). This is the reason why I aim to juxtapose the old and the new in my own work as an attempt to create a fresh look that forces people to revisit the wrong doings in history from a new perspective. Cotter also stated that “slavery had a long institutional history in Europe, and for centuries most slaves were white, from the eastern Mediterranean and Russia. The source changed with the beginnings of an African slave trade in Europe in the mid-1400s. And the complexion of European art, subtly but surely, changed with it” (Cotter 2012).

The exhibition in the Walters Art Museum aimed to show that Africans were once regarded as equals. One of the three foreign kings in the Adoration of Magi was mostly depicted as a black person during an entire period of the Renaissance. The exhibition showed some of these works. For me, one of the works, namely “The Three Mulattoes of Esmeraldas” (1599), distinguished itself from the rest (See Figure 4.5). I was captivated by the image because it reflects my own theme and inspiration. In a sense it almost illustrates exactly what I want to achieve with my practical work — it empowers the wearer with symbols of power. The three ‘Mulattoes’ are portrayed here in a mixture of European and African clothing and adornments. This implies that, before Africa became the main source of Europe’s slave trade, Africans might have been respected in their own right. The spears and the ruff are visually combined and unearthed in this image in such a way that (with Eurocentric preconceptions and discourses informing our knowledge) it requires us to look twice at this work and its contradictions.

Having discussed how black people were depicted in Western art, next I would like to briefly discuss how some slaves of the world have been depicted in art in their own



Figure 4.5: "The Three Mulattoes of Esmeraldas" (1599) is one of the works in *Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe*, at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore. (New York Times 2012 [Online])

right. Seeing how Africans might have been respected and even revered (for their 'Other-ness') before Africa became the main source of the European slave trade, it is interesting to note how slaves have been depicted in art over the course of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, and even how they are depicted today. The slaves discussed here are each significant in their own right as they each project their own (if meagre) amount of power in their portrait.

The first, *The Bust of a Moor*, is included because it illustrates favouritism through the donning of an inscribed silver collar (Jones 2004). In the history of the depiction of the slave in art, the name of the model is generally unknown. The second and third images are unique: the slaves were asked by the artist how they would like to be portrayed. The ensemble they chose is telling of their perceptions of power dressing. They donned clothes that made them appear intentionally different to their masters.

#### 4.3.1 Bust of a Moor (c. 1700) by John van Nost

King William the Third, commissioned *The Bust of a Moor*, which portrays his favourite slave (see Figure 4.6). The latter is implied by the way the slave is dressed and especially the inscribed silver collar around his neck. However, the name of the slave has long since been forgotten. John van Nost the Elder depicted this stately bust of 'an African man, dressed in a feathered turban, a shirt with delicately scalloped collar, and a bejewelled band dripping over his shoulders. It is known that masters commissioned portraits of their slaves out of esteem. "But the truth of the matter is that the King was his owner: slaves were often garishly dressed and commonly wore, as does this Moor, a silver collar which often featured a discreet padlock engraved with their owner's name" (Jones 2004).

This bust is from the Royal Collection of the British Monarchy. "It is remarkable for its display of deft techniques associated with *pietre dure*<sup>71</sup>, in which a variety of exotic and

---

<sup>71</sup> "Pietre dure" is defined in the Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary (1913) as "Hard and fine stones in general, such as are used for inlay and the like, as distinguished from the softer stones used in building; thus, a Florentine mosaic is a familiar instance of work in *pietra dura*, though the ground may be soft marble" (Merriam 1913. Sv "Pietre dura").



Figure 4.6: *Bust of a Moor*  
John van Nost. (c.1700)  
(The Royal Collection, 2012 [Online]).

multicoloured stones are precisely assembled” (Jones 2004).

#### 4.3.2 *Juan de Pareja* by Velazquez (1650)

Velazquez’s painting *Juan de Pareja* is displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The gallery label next to this painting reads:

This extraordinary portrait depicts Velázquez’s slave of Moorish descent, who served as an assistant in his workshop. Painted in Rome, it was displayed publicly beneath the portico of the Pantheon in March 1650. Velázquez clearly intended to impress his Italian colleagues with his unique artistry. Indeed we are told that the picture ‘gained such universal applause that in the opinion of all the painters of the different nations everything else seemed like painting but this alone like truth’. Juan de Pareja became a painter in his own right and was freed by Velázquez in 1654 (Metropolitan Museum of Art 2013).

#### 4.3.3 *Django Unchained* by Quentin Tarantino

*Django Unchained* (2012) is an American Western film that investigates the expansive slave trade in America in the 1850’s. In the film, the slave Django is given his freedom in exchange to trek and fight alongside a bounty hunter. As a free man, Django is allowed to pick a new set of clothing for himself. The image below depicts a scene from the movie and shows the outfit Django decided to wear: a bright blue suit with a stark white collar. These are the clothes he chose to mark his life as a free man. Most probably he reckoned this outfit gave him an aura of power, because that was the meaning he deduced from his previous masters’ clothing.

These three representations of slaves in Western art contributes to the investigation of representation, stereotypes and the hybrid effect of slavery in this study. “Bust of a Moor” depicts a slave that was considered a favourite of his master and represented as such through the very article of his bondage - the slave collar. “Juan de Pareja” by Velazquez represents a slave that worked himself into a position of power by learning from his master (Velazquez). The scene depicted in figure 4.8 of “Django Unchained” by Quentin Tarrantino shows the slave in a position of power over his former master. These three case studies are exemplary of situations where the normative version of the dualistic master/slave relationship is contested.



Figure 4.7: *Juan de Pareja*  
Diego Velazquez. (1650).  
Oil on Canvas. 81 x 69 cm.  
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York  
[Online] (MOMA, 20 13).



Figure 4.8: Jamie Foxx in Quentin Tarrantino's *Django Unchained*. 2012.  
Film  
(Staskiewicz, 2012 [Online]).



#### 4.4 The Collar and the Cuff Appropriated as symbols of Power and Oppression in Popular Culture and Sexual Practice

Through the years the dynamics, as well as visual symbolism of the dualistic master-slave relationship<sup>72</sup>, have been adopted into many forms of popular culture. This includes fashion, as well as some forms of sexual practice and pornography<sup>73</sup>. Examples of various (modern) appropriations of the shackle and cuff based on 'slavery chic' are included here to critically speculate briefly whether their creators were aware of the oppressive history behind the original objects. Another question can be asked, namely: If they were aware of the history behind these objects, and nevertheless used it in a noncritical way, what could the consequence(s) of that be? The consequences are that the history and suffering of these people (slaves) is marginalised all over again.

In my practical work, I was careful to create a self-reflexively critical body of work, which in no way romanticises the history of slavery. Rather, I try to present this relationship in an objective way, creating a hybrid with two different cultures brought together by fictional elements. However, I deemed it relevant to investigate all occurrences of the appropriation of these symbols as part of my research about the influences of the cuff and the collar on the design of contemporary art or jewellery on a global and local scale.

---

<sup>72</sup> As set out in the theory of Plumwood (1993) explained in the theoretical framework of this study. "A dualism is more than a relation of dichotomy, difference, or nonidentity, and more than a simple hierarchical relationship. In dualistic construction, as in hierarchy, the qualities (actual or supposed), the culture, the values and the areas of life associated with the dualised other are systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior. Hierarchies, however, can be seen as open to change, as contingent and shifting. But once the process of domination forms culture and constructs identity, the inferiorised group (unless it can marshal cultural resources for resistance) must internalise this inferiorisation in its identity and collude in this low valuation, honouring the values of the centre, which form the dominant social values" (Plumwood 1993: 47).

<sup>73</sup> When exploring the appropriation of the collar and the cuff in sexual practice, I have to delineate that fetishism will not form part of the scope of study, as the study would become too broad.



Figure 4.9: A design for sneakers promoted on the brand's Facebook page last year (Lynch, 2012 [Online]).

A popular case of 'slavery-chic' that has recently caused uproar in the media is depicted in Figure 4.9. Sweatshop labour — a modern form of slavery — is especially prevalent in the fashion industry. A well-known sport fashion brand promoted this edition of sneakers below on their Facebook page. It was met with outrage and the company retracted the design. The same company was locked in controversy over sweatshops just before the Olympic Games in London in 2012.

More cases of fetishised bondage appropriation appear in fashion magazines (Figures 4.10 and 4.11) These versions might seem more innocent in their representation, but it would be interesting to know if the consumers buying and wearing these products are aware of the complicated history of these symbols (and their meaning in the power and oppression relationship).

Another relationship of domination as an appropriation is found in bondage within a sexual context (BDSM<sup>74</sup>). Slave aesthetic and punishment artefacts are popular amongst those who exercise this kind of bondage technique in sexual practice. This relationship is interesting to me in terms of the history of the master-slave relationship. Novels such as *50 Shades of Grey* gained a lot of critique from both sides of the BDSM community (those who practice it, and those who don't) for its portrayal of this slave-master relationship and the dynamics behind it. The concept that some people want to dominate others in sexual practice to feel powerful is complicated (Jenn 2011). These cases need to be assessed individually in a professional psychological context to determine whether this kind of role-play satisfies the individual's need for domination. People who partake in BDSM may feel powerless in their everyday life, or they may indeed hold a powerful position and need some release to address certain tensions. There is no set stereotype for people who may enjoy this kind of role-play. Figures 4.12 and 4.13 are from the website, [www.spicesforlove.com](http://www.spicesforlove.com), where 'quality' BDSM toys and other sex toys are for sale.

---

<sup>74</sup> BDSM is a compound acronym for Bondage, Discipline, Dominance/submission, and Sadomasochism. (Jenn, 2011)



Figure 4.10: A pair of handcuff bracelets invoke more recent visual aesthetics of incarceration, but have ties to slavery and power, oppression and domination (Berman 2011 [Online]).



Figure 4.11: Wrists and ankle cuffs in fashion jewellery (Berman 2011 [Online]).

Figure 4.12: A women in modern neck and hand-cuff restraints. These toys are bought to enact a sexual relationship of power and oppression (Spicesforlove 2013 [Online]).

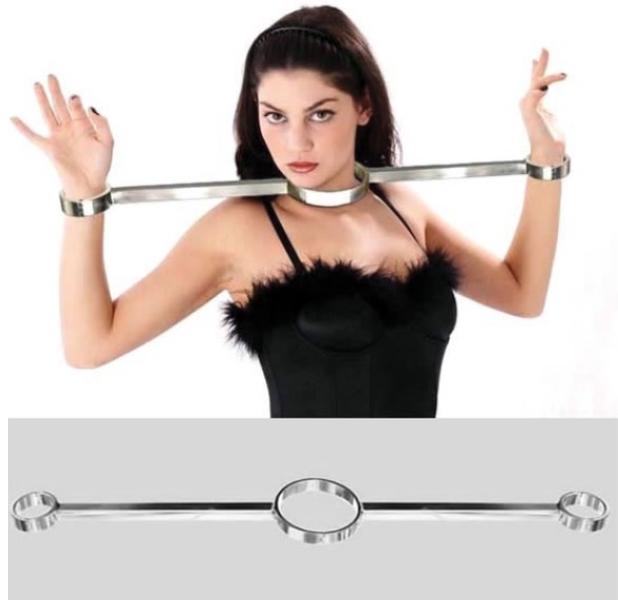


Figure 4.13: Another piece of sexual apparatus clearly designed to restrict movement (Spicesforlove 2013 [Online]).



The same symbols of oppression as discussed in this study (the collar and the cuff) are used to enforce the power/oppression narrative. These modern sex toys have an age old history of power, oppression and domination to corroborate their purpose and function<sup>75</sup>.



#### 4.5 The Soft Steel Collection

When creating a contemporary jewellery art series inspired by the identity construction process of the slaves and the masters at the Cape of Good Hope in the seventeenth century, one has to be careful of not exhibiting antiquarian or nostalgic notions. Hybridising this concept with identities prevalent at the Cape today (due to these original characters in history) might provide a fresh dimension to the pieces. In “Soft Steel”, I juxtapose both visual symbolic aesthetics of slave and master in order to provoke the audience to look for new ways of perceiving culture and identity in South Africa today.

##### 4.5.1 Soft Steel

In my practical work, I try to deconstruct the European process of crochet as a technique of creating a fabric with some kind of yarn, by using steel wire. By deconstructing ideas of classic crocheted doilie or clothing — items that are of quintessentially European aesthetic of the Golden Age<sup>76</sup> — I aim to comment once again on the empire of the VOC, which was built upon the marginalisation of other cultures.

Figure 4.17 and 4.18 are images of the “Soft Steel” collection. In these pieces I incorporated steel — the material that empowered Europe to dominate the world

---

<sup>75</sup> BDSM is a compound acronym for Bondage, Discipline, Dominance/submission, and Sadomasochism. (Jenn, 2011)

<sup>76</sup> The timeframe in which the colonisation at the Cape took place.

during the Golden Age. Steel was also used to forge the shackles and cuffs and tools of punishment and torture that restrained the slaves at the Cape. I also used the traditional European technique of crochet to make the steel wire into collars, and then I bejewelled these pieces with garnets and enamel to translate them into contemporary jewellery art pieces. The jewels and patterns added to these pieces were influenced by recognisable African and Asian traditional patterns and adornment. The reason for this is to purposefully create pieces where the slaves might have had some degree of identity, and consequently a small degree of power. The practice of using these items of oppression and torture willingly to equate it with pleasure is outside the scope of this research. The pieces take the form of contemporary South African identity constructing adornment items, in the shape of collars and cuffs.

Creating jewellery as adornment artefacts which is inspired by objects of oppression and human restraint should be considered critical pieces of art. It should not be perceived as a romantic recreation of a difficult part of many people's history and ancestry.



#### 4.6 Conclusion

The technique of destroying identities to overpower people is a known tool in dominating methods of Eurocentric discourse. As Plumwood explains in the quote below, the European identity was constructed by pitting itself against the 'Other', and marginalising the latter in the process:

The structure of reason/nature dualism and its variants is the perspective of power; it represents, as Nancy Hartsock notes, 'a way of looking at the world characteristic of the dominant, white, male Eurocentric ruling class, a way of dividing up the world that puts an omnipotent subject at the centre and constructs marginal Others as sets of negative qualities' (Hartsock 1990:161). This perspective constructs these others by exclusion (or some degree of departure from the norm or centre) as some form of nature in contrast to the subject, the master, who claims for himself both full humanity and reason. The west's understanding of the key concepts through which it deals with the world, its understanding not only of reason and nature but of their specific dualistic forms, has been formed from such contrasts and exclusions (cited in Plumwood 1993: 44).



Figure 4.14: Carla Kruger. "Soft Steel" - Design Process. 2013.



Figure 4.15: Carla Kruger. "Soft Steel" - Design process. 2013. Electronic illustration.



Figure 4.16: Carla Kruger. "Soft Steel" - Design process. 2013.



Figure 4.17: Carla Kruger. "Soft Steel". 2013. Steel binding wire, crocheted, enamel, garnet, sterling silver chain.

(Photo: Carla Kruger)

The Europeans were able to maintain a wealthy empire by destroying the identities of any 'other' peoples or culture they came across or that crossed their path. The destruction of these identities led to the emergence of a new — South African — identity, what Bhabha calls the hybrid product of the colonial paradigm (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 35). A complete intermix of the imports (slaves) and locals (Khoekhoen) created this hybrid culture, the culture known as South African. A new aesthetic emerged: one in which these lost and stolen cultures imported whatever remnants of their own cultures they could carry with them from their old life. Many artists (Andrew Putter is one example) try to present these hybrid peoples in a new way, and it is in this same way that I aim to present my work.

The Dutch thought they could eradicate the 'Otherness' of the Khoekhoen and the slaves. By baptising them and dressing them in western clothes, the Dutch thought they could control the slaves and the Khoekhoen. However, through the natural circumstances in a colonial country (a country which was extremely isolated) the white, black and coloured cultures began to mix. This phenomenon gave way to the culture and peoples who are living at the Cape today. Contrary to popular belief, it is not just the coloured community at the Cape that can claim slave heritage. My research indicates that many South Africans would be able to trace slave and Khoekhoen heritage in their genealogy. This is noteworthy of a post-colonial, post-apartheid country, and interesting to monitor how this knowledge will inform future relations at the Cape and in South Africa, especially in the art world.



Figure 4.18: Carla Kruger. A piece in the “*Soft Steel*” collection. 2013.  
Sterling silver, oxidised, steel binding wire, crocheted.  
(Photo: Carla Kruger)



## Conclusion



### 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will summarise the relevant deductions based on my research. I will also provide answers for the primary and secondary problem statements presented in the introduction to this study. I argue that the notion of a power relationship can be constructed in many different ways. This relationship can be imposed physically, mentally and/or visually. During the period at the Cape delineated in my study, the dualistic power relationship between master and slave was portrayed visually by the two elements, namely the collar and the cuff. The influence of these two elements and their symbolism within the power and oppression relationship and their power in deconstructing this relationship will be concluded in this chapter.



### 5.2 Answering the Problem Statement

The following primary problem was researched in this study:

In which ways did the cuff and the collar illustrate power and oppression in the seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope?

In order to answer this question satisfactorily, the following secondary questions have been deduced:

- How would these articles (the cuff and the collar) influence the design of contemporary art or jewellery on a global scale?
- How would these articles (the cuff and the collar) influence the design of contemporary art or jewellery in South Africa?
- How would these articles (the cuff and the collar) subsequently influence my designs of contemporary jewellery?

### 5.2.1 In which ways did the cuff and the collar illustrate power and oppression in the seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope?

For this study, I have explored theories, examples and case studies of the power and oppression relationship (based on slavery and colonialism) on a global scale and at the Cape in the seventeenth century. These theories, examples and case studies all substantiated my problem statement: that the cuff and the collar as visual and symbolic entities illustrate power and oppression at the seventeenth century Cape of Good Hope. This was a result of the naturalisation of the hegemonic discourse of Eurocentricity, which was implemented by the Dutch when they colonised the Cape and instituted slavery. By reiterating visual symbols, these hierarchies had been established and its veracity had not been questioned — until now.

Based on various historical sources which I consulted to analyse this visual paradigm, I can deduce that the cuff and the collar illustrated power and oppression at the Cape on two levels: physically (as discussed in Chapter 2 ‘The White Collar as Part of the Power Uniform’ and Chapter 3 ‘The Shackle as the Burden of the Oppressed’), as well as mentally (as explored in Chapter 4 ‘Identity Construction and Deconstruction at the Cape’). Using these symbols on a literal and emotional level ensured total assimilation of their meaning in the collective mind of the society at the Cape.

By using these tools to establish power and enforce oppression (the collar and the cuff), the European intention at the Cape was to eradicate any ‘Other’ kind of identity. What emerged, as a result of these methods, was a distinctive ‘Cape’ or ‘South African’ identity — a hybrid culture that constitutes the South African society today.

### 5.2.2 How would these (the cuff and the collar) influence the design and creation of contemporary art or jewellery on a global scale?

Western art in the sixteenth to nineteenth century depicted the cuff and the collar in such a way as to aid the process of the Eurocentric imperialist claim. More recently, contemporary artists have searched for ways to undermine and deconstruct these depictions, in order to critique the practice of using these symbols to facilitate a

power/oppression model. On a global scale, the artists discussed in this study included Heejin Hwang, Anika Smulovitz, Fred Wilson and Quentin Tarantino. I also discussed the few cases of slaves being depicted in art in a unique light (other than the usual depictions, i.e. they would only be included to corroborate the patron's wealth) such as *Juan de Pareja* by Diego Velazquez.

These artists used the collar and the cuff to self-reflexively comment on the power/oppression relationship. In this study, the influence of the collar and the cuff had been investigated in terms of these artists' methods. These methods mostly included hybridisation and juxtaposition of semiotics to deconstruct visual hierarchies. They also included the practice of the fictionalisation of history to critique history construction in a power/oppression paradigm.

Theorists whose work I found relevant to this study include Homi Bhabha's theory on 'the Other'; Tony Fluxman's writings on coordination and oppression; Jan Nederveen Pieterse's views on visual naturalisation and stereotyping; Fred Wilson's theory of the 'metonymic' characteristics of objects in his work, as well as White and Beaudry's interpretation of Judith Butler's writings on identity construction.

### 5.2.3 How would these (the cuff and the collar) influence the design of contemporary art or jewellery in South Africa?

In South Africa, some artists have used the cuff and the collar as symbols to deconstruct the relationship of power and oppression that led to the hybrid culture that constitutes the contemporary South African society. Andrew Putter, as the example discussed in this study, explores themes of fiction in his work to visually deconstruct any hierarchies and boundaries set out by the colonial regime at the Cape. He uses the white collar in his work to re-tell (hi)stories in a fictional, juxtaposed manner in order to successfully deconstruct boundaries of power and oppression at the Cape.

Many contemporary South African artists search for ways to present this hybrid culture, as well as the post-apartheid identity, in their work. Almost 20 years after apartheid was

abolished, most South Africans are still re-evaluating their place in this country, what their heritage entails and what the consequences of their actions are on future generations.

#### 5.2.4 How would these (the cuff and the collar) influence my designs of contemporary jewellery?

I have established the theory in this study as concurrent to my practical work. Through my work I aim to visualise the consequences of slavery and colonialism on the culture of South Africa today. The relationship between master and slave at the Cape was not simply a linear (black and white) relationship. It was loaded with traditions and cultures and collective memories which became entwined and resulted in the culture present at the Cape today. Many people may ask why an investigation of the initial colonisation is relevant. Many recent conflicts occurred that also shaped the history of this country. However, these conflicts originated from these first relationships between the European and 'Other' at the Cape.

In my practical work, *The Ruff/Rough Collection*, *The Shackle Collection* and *The Soft Steel Collection*, I aimed (and hopefully achieved) to query and critique the practice of history recording at the Cape. In the same vein, I queried the set of hierarchic values, whether historical or visual, which accompanied this Eurocentric doctrine. These hierarchic values presented by the cuff and the collar have been extensively deconstructed in my work. The collections offer a fictionalised account of 'what could have been', if cultures had not been marginalised, and the power/oppression paradigm had not happened, or at least not to the degree that it did. The sentiment is that the work be perceived to inspire a (fictional) more equalised version of history, where everyone had an equal chance. Such utopian notions may be perceived as naive, but such an investigation is necessary when one tries to uncover what needs to be done in terms of restitution in this country.

## List of references



Agarwal, K.G. & Sharma, B.R. 1977. Gratification, Metamotivation and Maslow. *Vikalpa*. Vol. 2, No. 4, October 1977. [Online] Available:

[http://www.vikalpa.com/pdf/articles/1977/1977\\_Oct\\_Dec\\_265\\_272pdf.pdf](http://www.vikalpa.com/pdf/articles/1977/1977_Oct_Dec_265_272pdf.pdf) [10 November 2013]

Ashcroft, Bill. & Griffiths, Garreth. & Tiffin, Hellen (eds). 1995. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Bălan, Sergiu. 2010. M. Foucault's View on Power Relations. "Cogito. Multidisciplinary Research Journal" Bucharest. Vol. II, no. 2, June 2010, pp. 55 - 61. [Online] Available: <http://cogito.ucdc.ro/en/index.html> [16 July 2013]

Bhabha, Homi K. 1990. *Nation and Narration*. Oxon: Routledge.

Bindman, David. 2011. "The image of the Black in western art". *Apollo*. February 2011 edition. (p. 20 – 23)

Blaut, James. 2000. *Eight Eurocentric Historians*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Blok, PJ and Molhuysen, PC (eds.). 2008. *New Dutch biographical dictionary*. Part 10. [Online] Available: [http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/molh003nieu10\\_01/molh003nieu10\\_01\\_0113.php](http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/molh003nieu10_01/molh003nieu10_01_0113.php) [9 November 2013]

Boddy-Evans, Alistair, n.d. Genealogy of Afrikaners. *African History, About.com*. Available: <http://africanhistory.about.com/od/southafrica/p/AfrikanerGene.htm> [27 October 2013]

Breuer, Rosemarie. 2012. Johannes A. Heese. *Stellenbosch Writers*. [Online] Available:

<http://www.stellenboschwriters.com/heeseja.html> [27 October 2013]

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Cotter, Holland. 2012. 'A Spectrum from Slaves to Saints'. *The New York Times*. [Online] Available: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/09/arts/design/african-presence-in-renaissance-europe-at-walters-museum.html?\\_r=1&](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/09/arts/design/african-presence-in-renaissance-europe-at-walters-museum.html?_r=1&) [27 October 2013]

Den Besten, Liesbeth. 2011. *On Jewellery*. The Netherlands: Arnolsche.

During, Simon. 1993. *The Cultural Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Fluxman, Tony. 2004. *Coordination, Ideology, and Oppression*. Stockholm University. [Online]. Available: <http://people.su.se/~guarr/Ideologi/Fluxman%20on%20Coordination%20Ideology%20and%20Oppression%20Oct%202004.pdf> [16 July 2013].

Frederickson, George M. 1981. *White Supremacy: a Comparative Study in American and South African history*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Giliomee, Herman. & Mbenga, Bernard. (eds). 2007. *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*. Cape Town: Tafelberg.

González, Jennifer A. (ed). 2008. *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Hall, S & Gieben, B (eds). 1992. *The Formations of Modernity: Understanding Modern Societies*. UK: Polity Press.

Heese, Hans. 2005. *Groep sonder grense*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis.

Heese, Johannes. 1971. *Die Herkoms van die Afrikaner*. Cape Town: Balkema.

Jenn, Doll. 2011. BDSM 101. *Transcending Boundaries*. [Online] Available: <http://www.transcendingboundaries.org/resources/bdsm-101.html> [29 October 2013]

Jones, Ronald. 2004. 'Below Stairs'. *Frieze Magazine*. Issue 81, March 2004. [Online] Available: [https://www.frieze.com/issue/review/below\\_stairs/](https://www.frieze.com/issue/review/below_stairs/) [29 October 2013]

Malpas, Simon & Wake, Paul (eds.). 2006. *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory*. Oxon: Routledge.

Matthee, Dalene. 2000. *Pieterella van die Kaap*. Cape Town: Tafelberg

Mbembe, Achille. 2001. *On The Postcolony*. Los Angeles: University of California Press

Merriam, C. & G. 1913.

Patric Tariq Mellet. 2009. *Drawing the longbow in the VOC Fort: Krotoa of the Goringhaicona and Cochoqua (1642-1674)* [Online]. Available: <http://www.geni.com/people/Krotoa-van-Meerhof/6000000000732042838>. [28 October 2013]

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. 1995. *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular culture*. Amsterdam: Instut voor Tropen.

Plumwood, Val. 1993. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge.

Putter, Andrew. 2009. *Putter* in CreativeAfricaNetworks. [Online] Available: <http://www.creativeafricanetwork.com/person/16193/en> [25 October 2013]

Putter, Andrew. 2009. "Putter" in *CreativeAfricaNetworks*. [Online] Available: <http://www.creativeafricanetwork.com/person/16193/en> [10 November 2013]

Putter, Andrew. (andrewputter@gmail.com), 12 July 2011. Re: Personal interview with Andrew Putter. Email to Carla Kruger (maxine.ck@gmail.com)

Ross, Robert. 1983. *Cape of torments: Slavery and resistance in South Africa*. London: Routledge.

“Ruff”. 2013. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. [Online] Available: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/512323/ruff> [10 November 2013]

Sadlier, Darlene J. 1998. *An Introduction to Fernando Pessoa: Modernism and the Paradoxes of Authorship*. USA: University of Florida Press.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1974. *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin. London: Fontana

Schoeman, Karel. 2001. *Armosyn van die Kaap. Die wereld van 'n slavin, 1652-1733*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

Schoeman, Karel. 2007. *Early Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope 1652-1717*. Pretoria: Protea Book House.

Schoeman, Karel. 2009. *Seven Khoi Lives: Cape Biographies of the seventeenth century*. Pretoria: Protea Book House.

Scribner. 2008. ‘Spanish Fashion 16th Century’. *History Blog*. Word Press. [Online] Available: [blog.aurorahistoryboutique.com/16th-century-fashion-the-ruff-a-collar-with-meaning/](http://blog.aurorahistoryboutique.com/16th-century-fashion-the-ruff-a-collar-with-meaning/) [24 January 2013]

Smulovitz, Anika. 2005. *White Collar Series*. [Online]. Available: [http://anikasmulovitz.com/section/139953 White Collar.html](http://anikasmulovitz.com/section/139953%20White%20Collar.html) [14 July 2013].

*South African History Online* n.d. [Online] Available:

<http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/response-june-16-soweto-youth-uprising-organisations-exile>  
[11 November 2013]

Terreblanche, Sampie. 2013. Lecture delivered at the Visual Arts Department, Stellenbosch University. 2 September 2013.

*The New Oxford American Dictionary*. 2010. 3rd Edition. London: Oxford University Press.

Thompson, Leonard. 2006. *A History of South Africa*. Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

White, C & Beaudry, M. 2009. 'Artifacts and Personal Identity'. *The International Handbook of Historical Archaeology* (ed. by Teresita Majewski and David Gaimster). New York: Springer.

