Elisions and Lacunae: Aspects of South African landscape in relation to public and private identities.

Submitted to fulfill the requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy

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May 1995

ABSTRACT

This project is concerned with articulating a number of positions around meaning and hegemony in museums and how such relationships can be refigured. It looks at how texts have been written in a unique exhibition in South Africa, the William Fehr Collection at the Castle. This Collection is unique in that the specific conditions of its sale to the state in 1964 determine its function as a museum within a museum. It is also unique in that its first public showing was as part of the Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival of 1952, where it formed the bulk of a *Historical Exhibition of Arts* at the Castle. I examine how meanings are constructed in the Collection , and how these meanings gain authority in abstract terms through conceptualising space in particular ways. I argue that how space is conceptualised forms a site of critical intervention. I counter the notion of absolute space with a commitment to mobile positioning . To do this, I look at how landscape conventions at Table Bay (well-represented in the Collection) apparently construct a singular position, extending this into an examination of how meanings have been refigured in museums by a number of conceptual artists. I suggest that this project can be extended into a physical intervention in the form of an audio-tour through the Collection. I have produced such an acoustiguide entitled *A Passage through the William Fehr Collection.* This thirty-five minute tour is available from the Professional Officer of the William Fehr Collection at the Castle.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I hereby gratefully acknowledge bursaries from the Centre for Science Development and the MacIver scholarships from the University of Cape Town . I am particularly thankful to Malcolm Payne, my supervisor, for his encouraging and provocative supervision and to my co-supervisor John Noyes for his clarity and guidance. Special thanks also J. Lalou Meltzer, the Professional Officer of the William Fehr collection for sharing her wealth of knowledge with me and for her support. Her vision for the Collection has been largely responsible for a number of ground-breaking exhibitions and projects under the auspices of the Collection at the Castle and elsewhere in the city. I am indebted to Lalou, Paul Grobbelaar and the staff of the William Fehr Collection for their assistance and interest, for granting me access to the Collection and documentation and for permission to include images from the Collection in this work. Particular people made many useful comments and listened to many more unfinished ideas: Wilma Coetzee, Federico Freschi, Kevin Atkinson, Randy Hartzenberg, Lusi Linder, Peter Hayes, Catharina Weinek, Gabriella Kaplan, Vaughan Beckerling, Linda Farlam, my colleagues in the Masters programme at the Michaelis School of Fine Art and the staff of the school. Heartfelt thanks to them and to Vaughan, Linda, and Claire Bourquin for technical assistance. Jason Crook helped enormously by scanning the images. I would also like to thank the staff of various libraries: the UCT libraries (in particular Jo-ann Cruywagen), the William Cullen Library at Wits, the Brenthurst library, the Johannesburg Public Library and the South African Library. This project could not have been completed without the generosity, patience and support of my parents, Ian and Carrol Farlam and of my husband, James Ashton. Ian gave me access to his extensive Africana library and drew my attention to a wide range of illuminating texts. The sacrifices James has made have been immense, and to him I dedicate this project with much love.

I confirm that this is wholly my own work and that any errors or omissions are mine alone.

INTRODUCTION

The central concern of this project is with questions of meaning and hegemony in the context of visual representations of the past. As such it is a work in the making: its intervention can never achieve closure.

I began this project looking at questions of landscape and nationalism in South Africa and have landed up at first sight in a rather unlikely place -- at the William Fehr Collection of pictorial Africana at the Castle, South Africa's oldest building. My interest in landscape arose from a study I undertook in 1988-90 in which I examined the place of J. H. Pierneef in South African historiography. I argued that the status accorded Pierneef in this country's art historical canon had not been sufficiently assessed in relation to the artist's role as a champion of Afrikaner nationalism. A large part of that paper deals with an explication of the myth of Pierneef, investigating his critical constructions in relation to the thirty-two panels Pierneef made for the Johannesburg station (1928-32).[1] Traditional art history in South Africa (exemplified by Esme Berman (1st ed. 1970)) reified Pierneef's *oeuvre* according to hermeneutic preoccupations with stylistic teleologies, and so on, thereby eliding how he had been produced as a cultural hero by leading proponents of Afrikaner nationalism like J. F. W. Grosskopf (see Farlam 1990). I argue that Pierneef's landscapes, particularly his official commissions, can be seen to represent the ideology of Afrikaner nationalism: they are visual statements of public identity with specific political intent.

The William Fehr Collection forms an interesting counterpoint to Pierneef's Station Panels in that both have been linked to different representations of the South African past. The Collection was first exhibited as part of the Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival at the Castle in 1952. This narrative recontextualised and in some areas contradicted partisan Afrikaner histories produced forty years previously and

[1] I first tested these ideas in a paper written in my final undergraduate year at Wits in 1988. The ideas contained in this thesis were subsequently taken up by Wayne Barker in a series of paintings begun late in 1988 as a theme to which he continues to refer (see *Vrye Weekblad* April 1990).

exemplified by an artist like Pierneef. This new history came to the fore at around the time of the National Party's rise to power in 1948. It can be seen as part of the production of a white hegemony in civil society to legitimate the burgeoning ideological programme of apartheid by attempting to unite all white South Africans in a sense of shared destiny. To this end, Jan van Riebeeck was constructed as an icon and imbued with almost messianic characteristics as the father of white South Africa (Rassool & Witz 1992:17). At the Festival, the Collection comprised the bulk of a *Historical Exhibition of the Arts* at the Castle (William Fehr was Vice-Chairman of the Festival Fine Arts Committee). The exhibition, a fair and a pageant were produced to proclaim the status of white South Africa as a modern industrial state. The theme of the Festival was a symbol of national unity and involved a programme dealing with 300 years of western civilisation of which Jan van Riebeeck was the keynote. Conceptually, the exhibition, the fair and the pageant were constructed around a binary in which Civilisation, Progress and Light were equated with whites, while blacks were portrayed as simple children redeemed by the intervention of Civilisation.

The Collection is unique in South Africa because a condition of sale upon its purchase in 1964 was that it would remain intact as an entity in some suitable place in Cape Town only. Today it is still displayed in the former Governor's rooms at the Castle exactly as arranged by William Fehr before his death in 1968. It thus functions as a museum within a museum, preserving the collection according to a fixed pattern of display. The institutional framework of the Castle forms another interesting aspect of the construction of narrative meanings in the exhibition, particularly in relation to the official tour of the Castle and the controversy over the showing of videos of the historical significance of the Castle. Since last year three exhibitions have been staged by the William Fehr Collection which challenge the hegemonic interpretations of official supremacist histories.

The aim of this project is to refigure the Collection by finding a way to de-centre its relationship to narratives like the Tercentenary narrative. It is divided into four parts,

with the idea of working towards recontextualising the Collection in a physical form. In the first chapter, I recall how the Collection came into being as the result of one man, William Fehr. I argue that the narrative popularised in 1952 and seen to be illustrated by the Collection utilises two contradictory constructions of history. In the accompanying catalogue to the *Historical Exhibition of Arts*, objects and images are recruited into a teleology as windows or freeze-frames on to a recoverable past. At the Castle itself, the meaning of the objects is located in the simulation of a timeless historical space. While the first narrative is constructed according to a perceived movement across *time*, the second appeals to the timelessness of a homogeneously constructed historical *space*. Both narrative forms, however, rely on a particular construction of space as closed and homogeneous.

The central thesis of this project is that it is through looking at how space(s) are constructed in abstract terms that the most effective critical interventions can occur. One of the difficulties is that absolute space has become thoroughly naturalised -- more than any other, the absolute conception of space has contributed to what is widely assumed today as commonsense definitions of space. Chapter Two is a theoretical chapter concerned with the genesis and mechanisms of this language inaugurated by the invention of linear perspective and the rediscovery of the Ptolemaic grid in the Renaissance. Perspective and mathematical mapping conceived of space as an abstract, homogeneous and stable framework of thought rooted in the illusion of a spectator who occupies a position outside of space. This conception became increasingly hegemonic during the Enlightenment by making it seem as if the universe could be divided into discreet bits "with the new rationality grounding itself in the identification of differences between things based on measurement and classification" (Hooper-Greenhill 1989:65). It was a science that travelled well in that there was no place on the globe and no creature or thing in it which could not be accorded a sense of its rightful place within a pre-existing universal order of knowledge. From the concept of private property to the juridical assumption of the individual body as the social unit, absolute space became established as the premise of hegemonic social practices.

This conception of space rests on a number of contradictory mechanisms, particularly its construction as both opaque or concrete and transparent or entirely knowable (Soja 1989). It also elides what it depends on for its meaning -- an other -- generally conceived as emanating from a dominant bipolarity (Soja & Hooper 1993:186). Absolute space is hegemonic because it articulates different versions of the world in such a way that their differences are neutralised. It represses difference by subsuming them within its own order , thus denying the possibility of multiple subject positions and temporalities. It is a model which in Carter's words, "renders time clockwork and miniaturizes space" (Carter 1987:xix).

The term "spatiality", however, suggests more than multiplicity and difference; it is a term articulated in relation to the theatrical preference of imperial histories for fixed facts and events by drawing attention to how the metaphoric and the real are in part constitutive of one another. Spaces do not simply exist in the world -- they are shaped by the metaphorical intervention of language. In the second chapter, I argue against the hegemony of absolute space and its relationship to imperial histories by referring to Carter's concept of spatial history and Lefebvre's notion of differential space. These descriptions fracture the illusory authority of absolute space by emphasising how meanings are created through a layering and crossing over of a number of spatial practices. Any apparent conceptual, formal or ideological unity (like objects or imperial narratives, for example) can be de-centred by paying attention to "the spaces difference makes" (Soja & Hooper 1993:183).

Returning to the Collection in Chapter Three, I contest the stability of the foundational emphasis of the Tercentenary narrative in an examination of 17th century images of Table Bay. These images offer a useful way of framing the central theoretical concerns of this project insofar as they can be seen to encapsulate the changing concerns and desires of European travellers at the Cape. My aim in this chapter is to separate these images from an originary, linear, supremacist narrative by reevaluating some of these representations to reveal the presence of multiple subject

positions and identities. I argue that landscape conventions encapsulate the contradictory and ambiguous nature of the apparent stability of the imperial eye, inscribing different ways of codifying a colonially produced other in a variety of (apparently) fixed and stable positions and a variety of (seemingly) given sets of differences. One of the most interesting aspects of this is apparent in the emptying out of the Khoikhoi from representations of Table Bay and their subsequent reemergence as ethnographic types.

I am interested in the process whereby certain naturalised historical formulations, constructed as linear and empirical, appear to have authority and are used as tools to justify and explain events in the present. I began this project by indicating a desire to explore the absences and erasures of such histories, not only in relation to aspects of lived experience that have been overlooked, but in relation to other historical accounts regarded as less natural and suppressed or ignored. Museums are a dominant medium through which the past is visually and publicly presented. This knowledge is particularly dangerous because it is usually assumed to operate outside the zone in which objects change their meanings in relation to their contexts.

I argue that insofar as it is impossible to speak of an object without in some way inscribing it in particular discourses (and not others), it is impossible to separate the meaning of an object from its context which in the final instance frames the meaning of the work. (This is not to deny the materiality of objects but rather to argue that this materiality can never constitute a single, closed text.) Texts neither have immanent meanings, nor are their meanings entirely the creation of the audience. Museums function in a manner "not unlike the diagrammatic or visual logic of scientific demonstration, wherein the actual arrangement of evidence itself constructs the 'truth' of what is intended" (Preziosi 1993:299). The closure of meaning as exemplified by the museum has been questioned within and between a wide range of interdisciplinary interventions which challenge identity and power formations.

In Chapter Four I investigate how since the 1960s, conceptual artists have addressed the authority of the institution and its historical, taxonomic and teleological assumptions. These interventions, which occur primarily at the level of language, draw attention to a variety of ways in which viewers are recruited to identify with images that appear to be natural, inevitable, universal and immutable. Instead of emphasising common denominators, these historiographer artists analyse the spaces of dispersion and heterogeneous temporalities.

It is in this tradition of art-making that I am planning to intervene in the William Fehr Collection itself. Explorers' discourse is rooted not in any static, objective reality there to be described, but in the spaces of the journey. In working with the concept of history as spatial, my interest is to disperse the myth of spontaneous, theatrical settlement and linear progress, and to demonstrate the dialectical nature of knowledge and the sense in which history is a rhetorical construction rooted in language. The ways in which the travellers differentiated their descriptions had little to do with passive attributes of the country or its people but in the spaces metaphors made in the imperial mind's eye. Working with the elisions and displacements bound up with this spatialization of imperial narrative, I hope to blur the clear outlines of imperial histories. In so doing, I am reaching for a place where the static, ritualised identities of myth are relinquished and its fixed map of privileged territories and positions redrawn.

CHAPTER ONE

A text without words
The William Fehr Collection at the Castle, Cape Town

How colonial narratives are written in arrangements of objects is the subject of this project. The William Fehr Collection at the Castle (fig. 1) is a unique museum in South Africa in that the conditions of acquisition of this collection by the State in 1964, as preserved in Hansard (Addendum A), and its continuation in perpetuity as a museum within a museum preserve a particular mapping of historical space by a collector working with the cultural arm of the government. The collection, one of the largest and most valuable public collections of its kind in South Africa, includes paintings and decorative arts of special relevance to the Cape.

My particular concern is less with specific images in the collection, although that comes into it, but with representation as a medium or narrative frame in which shapes are ordered and selected to form a spatial field within the hierarchy and unity of a particular point of view. The collection highlights a relationship between material culture and history in how objects are used to construct ordained cultural, social and political narratives.

This ordained historical narrative operates on two opposing levels, both of which, I argue in this chapter, serve to dehistoricize the historical nature of the realms they manipulate. My starting point is the narrative of public history produced at the Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival in 1952 at which the collection was shown to the public for the first time. This was also the first time that Van Riebeeck was publicly hailed as a national hero in the context of a new official history of South Africa aimed at uniting all white settlers in a common heritage. It was a story that legitimated European possession of Table Bay (and by extension, South Africa) and the burgeoning ideology of apartheid through an appeal to construed values of European civilisation.

The collection formed part of a *Historical Exhibition of Arts* at the Castle along with the Van Riebeeck family portraits on loan from the Netherlands, maps and graphic works from the Netherlands and Cape furniture, silver and decorative arts. The accompanying catalogue declares that this exhibition "[calls] up 300 years of the nation's past . . . [telling] the story of those centuries in so far as it can be told, in terms of art" (*Historical Exhibition of Arts* catalogue 1952:5-6). The catalogue writer(s) place particular emphasis on the role of founding figures like Bartholomeu Dias, Vasco da Gama and of course the Van Riebeecks. This is a sequential narrative in which images are recruited as windows or freeze-frames on to a recoverable past. The writer(s) lament, however, the paucity of earlier records to add weight to the image of foundation:

> It is a pity that pioneers and founders of great enterprises are too busy making history . . . to make pictorial records. There is no scene of Governor Bax with a basket of earth on his shoulder, nor of a hundred and one lively episodes in the building of a nation. . . . Here and there like a flash of light on the long journey through time a passing traveller puts down with brush or pencil a note of the ships in Table Bay or of a scene in the little colony (*Historical Exhibition of Arts* catalogue 1952:5).

This episodic and foundational narrative, is however also rooted in another discursive realm, that of the historical tableau. Determined to avoid uninviting arrangements behind glass, Fehr sought to display his items both artistically and in a manner reminiscent of a domestic household (publicity leaflet for the Collection 1995). The writer (s) of the festival catalogue describe the conception of the exhibition in much the same terms as it is displayed today[1]:

> The object here has not been to change the aspect of the rooms into the popular conception of an Exhibition pavilion, or of an art gallery or museum. The screen and panelling in the first reception room of the Kat . . . introduce the display of historical paintings and drawings, fine Cape furniture and silver, rare china, pottery and glass of the founder nations, set out in such a way that the rooms themselves and the collection should form an ensemble. They are intended to have an air of being inhabited and at the same time reflect a heritage we possess in the history, the taste and the refinement of our past (*Historical Exhibition of Arts* catalogue 1952:6).

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[1] Although it is not stated in the brochure, I strongly suspect that William Fehr was the chief writer of this catalogue. He was the Vice-Chairman of the Festival Fine Arts Commitee. The tone and ideas expressed in this catalogue closely resemble Fehr's own writings; also since the exhibition largely centres on his collection, it seems plausible that he would have played a central role in writing about it at its first public showing.

In this case the truth is located differently. Whereas in the first narrative, the significance of the work is staged within the evolution of the nation over time, the second has obvious parallels with museums of natural history or ethnography, in which objects are displayed within a characteristic setting or environment (perceived as natural) dedicated to the simulation of a timeless historical space. This simulation is given weight and consistency by the architectural context of the former Governor's rooms at the Castle.

In the case of the Tercentenary narrative, the art object is specifically construed as an episodic moment within a chronological history entitled "The Building of a Nation" as triumphantly inaugurated on 6 April 1652 with the arrival in Table Bay of Van Riebeeck and the Dutch East India Company . In the second case, however, the object is purported to be in some way representative of its environment. The underlying assumption here is of a certain homogeneity in that environment, such that the time and place -- the specificities of history and moment -- are construed as in some way unified (for example stylistically, conceptually or ideologically). This presupposes that one can find traces or symptoms of that specificity in many or all the details of the material products of that milieu (Preziosi 1993:299). Both forms of museological explanation privilege a differently constructed set of origins. While the first narrative is structured according to a perceived movement across time, the second appeals to the timelessness of a homogeneously constructed historical space.

The appeal to spatial congruence in the Collection is rooted in a generalised conception of Historical ambience constructed out of a heterogeneous array of objects dating from the early 17th century to the beginnings of this century. This eclecticism, however, is contradicted in a newspaper article of 1965 in which Mrs Naomi Kingsley (the custodian of the Collection, who worked with Fehr) is quoted as saying that they liked visitors to see the rooms as they were actually lived in during the time of Lady Anne Barnard. It is not recorded if Fehr himself made such an extraordinary claim

given the vast scope of the Collection beyond the Barnards' time at the Cape[2], and the fact that many of the objects and certainly most of the paintings, were produced outside Africa for an audience in Europe and not for the Cape. Mrs Kingsley described how tourists are encouraged to feel at home:

> They show a keen interest in the small entrance table with its tables, chairs and furnishings which might have been used in an average country home. [Visitors] are allowed to sit with their elbows on the table just as if visiting an old friend. . . . One asked whether Governor van de Stel had himself put the curtains up (*The Argus* 14 August 1965).[3]

Despite the contradictory constructions of these intersecting narratives, both can be shown to rely on a point of view suggested by the term "imperial history". To a large extent one can identify imperial history with empirical history whose aim is to subsume differences within the unity of a singular *true* reading based on an alleged position of sovereignty outside language. These readings privilege certain constructions of time and space in assuming that historical events pre-exist their inscription in language and are recoverable in the form of discreet episodes harnessed within an evolutionary narrative and/or the simulation of a sense of historical ambience.

As the predominant component of the Fine Arts exhibition at the Van Riebeeck Festival, the Collection was conceptualised in the same ways as a fair and a pageant to tell an imperial tale centred on apparent facts of historical foundation. These 'facts' as I argue later are far from secure and need to be refigured as the products of a particular point of view, beginning with a discussion of how the Collection came into being.

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[2] The Barnards were resident at the Cape during the First British Occupation from 1797 to 1802. Lady Anne Barnard accompanied her husband Andrew who was Colonial Secretary at the Cape during this time.

[3] Fehr's apparent intention to recreate a sense of 18th century life at the Castle was augmented in the 1980s by the rebuilding of the bakhuis and the Dolphin Pool (where, according to the Castle's official guide, Lady Anne would bathe naked every morning) which had been demolished by the British in 1838 to create a larger parade ground. Recent renovations by the architect Gawie Fagan included the restoration of the original moat and an interior colour scheme in line with the colourful tastes of the 18th century.

The William Fehr Collection is not the result of selection by individual museum curators, but a reflection of the outlook, judgement and aesthetics of one person -- William Fehr (1892-1968) (publicity leaflet for the Collection) . He was born in Burghersdorp in the Cape of a German father; his mother was a Maskew directly descended from the original family to settle in the Eastern Cape between 1817 and 1820. Fehr recounts that his interest in Africana stemmed from his family's long association with cultural and historical traditions of the early Cape (unpublished address to the 1820 Settlers Memorial Association 6 September 1965).

Fehr was the founder of the Cape Sugar Exchange and a founder member of the Wholesale Cigarette and Distributors' Association. His wealth derived from the large wholesale grocery and tobacco business which bore his name and which included several retail outlets. His *penchant* for collecting initially included all forms of pictorial art (Fehr 1963:16). In the late 1920s he began to focus on South African-related paintings, prints and drawings, later extending his collecting to furniture, ceramics, metalware and glass (publicity leaflet for the Collection). He acquired works locally and internationally (he had a buyer in England)[4], at a time when there were very few private collectors and little systematic collecting by public institutions. He was the first South African collector who systematically imported pictorial Africana from abroad.[5]

In 1960, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Cape Town. Two days before his death he was awarded a gold medal by the Historical Monuments Commission (now the National Monuments Council) in recognition of his services to historical preservation. In *The Dictionary of South African Biography*, Bradlow pays tribute to Fehr's qualities as a collector and the importance of the Collection. Bradlow suggests that Fehr had "impeccable taste" and "extraordinary intuition . . . In this sphere", the writer adds, "Fehr had no equal, since his collection, covering 250

[4] This is apparent from information gleaned from copies of Fehr's private correspondence held by the Professional Officer of the William Fehr Collection.

[5] Fehr was also an assiduous collector of Africana books, pamphlets and manuscripts which his heirs donated to the University of Cape Town after his death (Meltzer 1994, in conversation).

years of South African history, was chosen with such discrimination" (Bradlow 1981:156). This tribute is ambiguous in its attitude to how histories are made. Bradlow seems to suggest that "as a connoisseur *par excellence*", Fehr presents a privileged window on to history; at the same time, however, Bradlow suggests that this history is made by the objects themselves in how "they illustrate the changing historical scene" (Bradlow 1981:156). Fehr's genius, it would seem, lay in his ability to choose the finest (and by extension the most Historically embodied) examples of the decorative arts. In the *Historical Exhibition of Arts* catalogue, the writer(s) suggest:

> Perhaps it should be said in parenthesis that such a selection is sure to give, in one sense, a misleading impression. No indication can be given of the immense flood of vulgarity and bad taste in all things of the household -- furniture, china, fabrics and architecture itself -- which has almost overwhelmed the finer influences of the past. A museum of bad taste would be necessary to tell this side of the story (*Historical Exhibition of Arts* catalogue1952:8).

According to Bradlow and the writers of the exhibition catalogue, the value of the Collection lies in its ability to conjure up a sense of the greatness of the past as worthy of the name of History.

It was Fehr's original and abiding intention to house the Collection in a country house within the environs of Cape Town to be supervised by his family along the lines of the National Trust in Britain. In a letter to a friend of 19 May 1965, he writes that by 1940 he already had plans prepared along such lines. He regretted that his family were not agreeable to the idea, however, which led him to consider alternatives.

The Collection[6] was first shown to the public as part of the Tercentenary Celebrations of the arrival of South Africa's first white settler, Jan van Riebeeck, in 1652. This festival was organised with particular ideological ends in mind. Rassool and Witz (1992) show that the central aim of this festival was one of nation building: this nation and its history were exclusively white. South Africa's past was conceptualised as the growth and development of Western Civilisation. Separate festivities were

[6] Not all of the Collection was shown at this time. Today the display at the Castle contains that portion of the Collection sold to the State in 1964. This does not include Fehr's collection of works on paper which were donated to the State for display in Rust en Vreugd.

designed for those who were not part of this nation, such as "the Bantu", "the Malay" and "the Griqua". Thus in its first public showing, an overt relationship was established between the Collection and an exclusive, supremacist narrative of the South African past.

The use of the Collection for the Tercentenary Celebrations recalled original plans to restore the Castle as discussed in May 1922, the year the building was declared a national monument. Evacuation by the Imperial War Command from the Castle in December 1921 had precipitated debate as to the uses of South Africa's oldest surviving building. A commitee under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Defence, Sir Roland Bourne, voted to restore and improve the Castle "so as to exhibit the historical interest it unfolds" (*Cape Times* 31 May 1922). They decided that the portion of the cross wall which used to be the Governor's residence to be of special historic interest and value and suggested it be "set aside for a worthy collection of South Africa's historical antiquities under the auspices of the National Society for South Africa[7] . . . That portion of the Castle would have to be suitably restored and altered structurally so as to exhibit properly to the public both the collection and the architectural, decorative and historical features of the building itself" (*Cape Times* 31 May 1922). The Second World War and reclamation and development of the foreshore stalled these plans.

Newspaper clippings in the Macmillan Archive at UCT report ongoing discussions around a suitable home for an Africana Museum in Cape Town. William Fehr features strongly in the debates, and appears to be the architect of the idea. In addition to being an esteemed collector, Fehr seems to have had a high public profile as a result of his impassioned and vocal views on the preservation of the culture of the early Cape. He suggested to *Die Burger* (27 February 1952) that various Africana collections housed in different buildings in Cape Town (he mentions the Mendelssohn Collection particularly) could be centralised at the Castle. An article in the same

[7] The committee mentioned that the South African Museum already had articles which could form the basis of such a collection. These were later housed in the old Supreme Court Building which became the South African Cultural History Museum in 1965 (Meltzer 1994, in conversation).

newspaper of 13 June 1956 reports that Fehr was unanimously supported by delegates from The Cape Town Art Society, as well as the Historical and Museum Societies, in a motion to house such an exhibition in the Old Supreme Court (formerly the old Slave Lodge). The Groote Kerk was also considered as a possible venue. As the old Supreme Court had not yet been restored, the Castle was considered a possible temporary home for a museum if permission could be obtained from the Western Province Command. This information and his private correspondence indicate that the Castle was not Fehr's first choice as a home of Africana, although it was one of a number of alternatives.

As it happened, Fehr's vision was partially fulfilled. Contrary to his original plan, the Collection was split into two shortly before his death. The bulk of the Collection, with the exception of the majority of works on paper, was bought by the Verwoerd government's Department of Education, Arts and Science in 1964 for the, then princely, sum of R300 000, where it continued to remain in the former Governor's rooms at the Castle.[8] Fehr's considerable collection of works on paper became the property of the State in a more circuitous way. Rust en Vreugd, a fine example of a late 18th century Cape townhouse, had been proclaimed a national monument in 1940, but continued to be used for various public purposes, the last of which was as a Training College for Hospital Nurses. On the advice of the Historical Monuments Commission, the Cape Administrator Dr Otto du Plessis agreed that the building should be restored if it could be put to a worthy use; Fehr agreed to lend his watercolours and early prints of the Cape for this purpose. Du Plessis appointed a committee to advise on the restoration for its use as a gallery and spared no expense in implementing this object (Fehr 1965:18) which on completion was handed over to the Central Government.

[8] The catalogue states that the bulk of the Fehr Collection was displayed at the Castle in 1952 in the 'Long Gallery' (on the sea side of the first courtyard) in specially converted barracks (Historical Exhibition of Arts catalogue 1952:8). The bulk of the important oil paintings from the Collection were housed in the State rooms of the Kat building.

The Collection at the Castle is unique in South Africa in that it was sold on the condition that "it be kept intact as an entity . . . to continue to form a permanent display at the Castle (or other suitable place) in Cape Town only" (Hansard 1964:3750) (see Addendum A). Until his death in 1968, William Fehr supervised the administration and display of the collection as an agreement of the sale. While these conditions decree that the Collection may in no way be altered in terms of additions and subtractions, it is theoretically conceivable that the collection could be housed somewhere else in Cape Town in a different form of display. It would seem to be implied rather than stated that it is kept in its original form. Today the Collection exists exactly as arranged by William Fehr himself in 1964.

These and a few other restrictions were debated in the House of Assembly in response to questions by the opposition United Party on the R300 000 spent on the Collection. The Minister of Education, Arts and Science confirmed this to be the largest amount ever given for such a purpose. Two of the three experts called in by the State valued the collection at half the amount for which it was sold. The highest evaluation was accepted on the grounds that "the collection has been made over thirty years and represents the specialised knowledge and aesthetic discernment of a skilled collector. Such a collection could not be repeated today" (*Cape Times* 6 April 1964).

The Castle is still the Headquarters of Western Province Command (as part of the newly realigned South African National Defence Force), with whom the William Fehr Collection shares premises. The Castle has never been demilitarised. By the mid 19th century, it was used solely for military purposes. On being declared a national monument in 1922, it was agreed to restore "historical" (*sic*) aspects of the building for public access (*Cape Times* 31 May 1922). The Castle has served as Headquarters for the Western Province Command since earlier this century, following evacuation by the Imperial War Command.

The William Fehr Collection is entirely separate from the military both spatially and officially. The Collection is housed in the area behind the Kat balcony, regarded as

the most historical aspect of the Castle's interior because of its architectural and decorative details. The Governor and Secunde were housed in the cross wall[9] until the end of the 17th century.[10] The Collection has its own Board of Trustees and is a state-aided institution within the new Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. The Board administers both the Collection at the Castle and at Rust en Vreugd.

The operations of the military and the William Fehr Collection are not as separate as one might imagine. The present Director of the Collection was formerly the Captain of the Castle. The Chairperson of the Board is the head of Western Province Command. This board has the right to veto professional decisions made by officers of the Collection. In 1994, they disallowed public showing of a video *The Stone Kraal*, made under the auspices of the William Fehr Collection, which challenges the 'official' history of the Castle as told until now. The video is now obtainable under restricted circumstances in that it may only be shown in conjunction with a recent video made by the Defence Force.

The military's version of the historical significance of the Castle also takes the form of a tour (in the two former official languages, English and Afrikaans) of (selective, recently restored) parts of the Castle elucidated hourly by a military guide garbed in the alleged uniform of the guards of William of Orange. This tour is not directly linked to the William Fehr Collection, and is undertaken by young military personnel. This tour encourages a perception of the Castle as the headquarters of a military elite. The Castle is presented as a place in which the ruling elite ate, slept, swam and strategised, and where they incarcerated their opponents in frightening conditions. It

[9] The cross wall and attached buildings had been erected to provide an additional line of defence within the Castle in the event of invasion. These were completed by 1695 (Meltzer 1995, in conversation).

[10] Although we know that the van de Stels had other homes by the end of the 17th century, there is no conclusive archival evidence for the exact date in which these rooms ceased to be used as the Governor's private rooms. It seems to have been a gradual process until after 1830 or thereabouts when it seems their function changed (Meltzer, 1994, in conversation).

is a narrative reminiscent of a historical play in which certain historical subjects have been invited to act. No mention is made of other lives or histories at the Castle.

At the same time, however, the staff of the William Fehr Collection are involved in an ongoing programme to open up the space of the Castle by publicising it as a viable and lively cultural centre for all Capetonians.[11] Historians and archaeologists have demonstrated the historical significance of the role played by the Castle in the lives of all sectors of Cape Town's small community following the establishment of a town on the shores of Table Bay.[12] The roles of soldiers, slaves and the Cape's indigenous population, the Khoi, were inextricably linked with the Castle. Yet these roles have been written out of this official history of the Castle and, through a more circuitous set of circumstances, the representation of Cape history seen to be embodied by the selection and display of Cape artefacts in the former Governor's quarters behind the Kat balcony.

Through selection, display and enunciation of selected features, objects and stories at the Castle, certain individual lives, peoples and events are daily constructed as historically visible while others are elided or repressed. This situation has a specific

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[11]In 1994 two events were hosted by the William Fehr Collection which challenge the hegemony of the traditional role of the Castle and and the history represented by the Collection as an elitist discourse. In April 1994, as part of the Sheik Yusuf Tercentenary, an exhibition entitled *300 years: The Making of Cape Muslim Culture* was held at the Castle. Muslim people at the Cape, many of whom are descended from slaves brought to the Cape, came back to the Castle *en masse* to celebrate a milestone in their history. This exhibition took the form of a 'living exhibition' organised by the Tercentenary Committee, in which visitors could witness a wide range of activities and objects being produced by Muslim craftspeople. Later in the year an exhibition was mounted in the Good Hope Gallery in association with the Mayibuye Centre at UWC entitled *Nederlands tegen apartheid* of Dutch anti-apartheid posters, clothing and literature. These two exhibitions challenge the singularities of class and nationhood bound up with the History that installations like the Collection have tended to be seen to affirm.
In April 1995, a Mayibuye Centre exhibition in association with the District Six Museum opened at the Castle, curated by Hilton Judin. Entitled *[setting apart]*, this is an exhibition of official records from the State Archives and oral testimonies "tracing the mechanisms of racial segregation and apartheid in our urban spaces" (exhibition invitation). Documents from 1901 onwards include much of the Group Areas legislation drawn up in the 1950s. This is an exhibition which confonts directly the chilling implications how social spaces and subjectivities were (and are) produced along ideological lines.

[12] See particularly Hall *et al* (1990), Hall (1992), Dooling (1994) & the video *The Stone Kraal* made under the auspices of the William Fehr Collection.

historical precedent and hinges on the construction of Jan van Riebeeck as the founding father of the South African nation.

The 1952 Jan van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival marked the first concerted attempt by the state to unite all white citizens in a common heritage centred on an icon of the emergence of white civilisation on the southern tip of Africa. In so doing it propelled Van Riebeeck into the spotlight as an icon around which South African history has been made and contested. In their paper "The 1952 Jan Van Riebeeck Tercentenary Festival: Constructing and Contesting Public National History" (1992), Rassool and Witz assert that it is ironical that "both by those seeking to establish apartheid and those who sought to challenge it, Van Riebeeck [has] represented the spirit of apartheid and the beginnings of white domination" (Rassool & Witz:25-6).

It is ironical, these writers suggest, that Van Riebeeck has been so taken for granted in this regard because the Tercentenary Festival provided an opportunity for the popular resurrection of Van Riebeeck from historical obscurity. Before the 1940's, Van Riebeeck and 6 April had very little place in public history except in relation to small-scale moments celebrating other themes such as reformed Christianity, Dutch-South Africa relations and volksplanting:

> By the 1940s South Africa had a weak national history. Historical figures were not accorded national prominence; events were not recorded as national South African milestones; there was no historical progression towards the accomplishment of nationhood (Rassool & Witz:5).

Certain building blocks of a national history has already taken shape through Afrikaner nationalist histories. These histories had been very much coloured by an almost mystical belief in the development of the *volk* to complete independence. The foci of these histories were the Great Trek and the Second Anglo-Boer War (Smith 1988:57, 68), both of which had been hugely popularised by the Afrikaans writer, journalist and filmmaker Gustav Preller (1875-1943).

The scale of Preller's achievement included the resurrection of the Great Trek as the pivotal event of this history (for which he invented a traditional dress in his film of the

Battle of Blood River of 1916) and the massive popular revival of heroes like Piet Retief whose heroism was greatly enhanced by the publication (in eleven impressions) of Preller's monograph of Retief in the manner of a fireside chat.[13] Preller's magazine, *Die Huisgenoot*, founded in the early 1920s successfully invented popular Afrikaner culture and even included instructions for housewives on traditional Afrikaans cookery and flower-arranging. Preller's importance lay in the ways in which he succeeded in arousing Afrikaners' interest in the value of ('their') history for learning and guidance. "For [Preller] the past was a giant arsenal from which he could select weapons to defend Afrikaner nationalism and attack British imperialism and Black 'barbarism'" (Smith 1988:68). These trends culminated in the *1938 Groot Trek Eeufees* which served to mobilise Afrikaans speaking whites as members of the Afrikaner nation, with its exclusive sacred traditions and history.[14] This vision attained messianic proportions with the inauguration of the Voortrekker Monument in 1949, erected " to engender pride in the nation of heroes which endured the hardships of the Great Trek'. The frieze on the interior of the monument [is intended to symbolise] the Afrikaner's proprietary right to South Africa" (Rassool & Witz 1992:3). Rassool and Witz assert that although the Voortrekker centenary celebration of 1938 started at the foot of Van Riebeeck's statue in Cape Town, Van Riebeeck was *not* represented as the founding father. The Afrikaner right to self-determination was portrayed as having occurred in spite of Van Riebeeck and the Dutch East India Company's intentions not to establish a permanent settlement.

The late 1940s witnessed a partial shift from a partisan, anti-imperial Afrikaner history, in which the British were portrayed as enemies, to a broader history which included all white settlers. Rassool and Witz argue that the rise to power of an Afrikaner nationalist alliance in 1948 required the construction of a white hegemony in civil society to legitimate the ideological programme of apartheid. The tenuous victory of this alliance, coupled with the limited framework of political support

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[13] See Hofmeyr (1984) & (1987).

[14] This Afrikaner nationalist history was given visual expression by J. H. Pierneef in the first public commission to be awarded in South Africa for a series of thirty two panels for the Johannesburg Station (1928-32) in which anti-British sentiment is a pivotal theme (see Farlam 1990).

afforded by Afrikaner nationalism, necessitated the mobilisation of a broader white settler nationalist rhetoric. While at times this came into conflict with the narrower Afrikaner nationalist agenda, the axis of this narrative was the whites' self-proclaimed role as bearers of civilisation, a role which started with colonial occupation in 1652. This narrative utilised historical sequences and events derived from previous usages which qualitatively transformed Van Riebeeck "from a person involved in historical processes to an icon of national history" (Rassool & Witz:6).[15]

After debating the merits of various themes for the festival, the Cape Town and Central Executive Committees finally decided to focus on a symbol of national unity as a theme for the Festival. This involved a programme dealing with 300 years of western civilisation in South Africa to be exhibited through

> historical displays which included a pageant highlighting certain events of South African history, a reconstruction of the landing of Van Riebeeck' s ship, the Dromedaris, the convergence of mail coaches from different corners of South Africa in Cape Town and a massive 'festival fair' exhibiting '300 years of agriculture, industry and mining'. In these ways, Van Riebeeck was given pride of place in South Africa's public history (Rassool & Witz:7).[16]

The Fair, Pageants and Fine Arts aspects of the Festival were pivotal events in establishing the paradigm of a symbolic national history and constituting its key elements. Rassool and Witz do not deal at all with exhibition organised by the Fine Arts Committee at the Castle although their analyses of the fair and the pageants raise issues for a discussion of the exhibition.

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[15] The fractured nature of this historical construction is apparent in the two books published at the time of the Festival. In *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika* (1951) edited by A.J.H.van der Walt, J.A. Wiid and A.L. Geyer, the 25 contributors all saw their subjects broadly speaking through Afrikaner nationalist eyes. A similar outlook is apparent in the five volume *Drie Eeue: Die Verhaal van ons Vaderland* (1952), a popular history written largely by A.J. Boeseken, D.W.Kruger and A. Kieser to coincide with the Tercentenary Festival (Smith 1988:89).

[16] "Thirty sub-committees with specific responsibilities were established to plan this public historical extravaganza ... A massive 50 000 seater stadium and exhibition halls were built on Cape Town's foreshore to accommodate the envisaged festivities. This was an expensive operation, requiring the construction of an infrastructure virtually from scratch, and costing some 450 000 pounds. The choice of venue was not accidental. The foreshore had been recently reclaimed as part of a massive centralised planning venture, as the port of entry to 'civilisation', the proposed 'Gateway of South Africa'" (Rassool and Witz:8).

The main elements of the fair, based upon the tradition of great fairs and world exhibitions, were the displays of industrial advancement and live human showcases, contrasting European progress with the savagery of 'the natives'. The achievements of industry, science and mining were put on show alongside a recreation of an alleged Bantu pavilion, a Zulu kraal, a display of South-West African bushmen, a reconstruction of a traditional English village and a replica of the market place of Culemborg, Van Riebeeck's birthplace.

The market place at Culemborg was situated near to the kraals which contained stereotypical portrayals of tribal life. The bushmen, supervised by the Chief Game Warden of South-West Africa, crafted bows and arrows in the gaze of thousands of onlookers eager to see their "childlike simplicity", hear their "animated clicks" and touch their "olive skins" (see Rassool & Witz 1992:10). The Bantu, meanwhile, built huts and practised potmaking, basket making and beadwork. The central theme of this fair was the civilising mission of the Europeans, presented as teachers and protectors of innocent and childlike savages. Replicas of relevant scenes from European history were juxtaposed with timeless scenes of native life; both of these served to highlight the theme of progress and sophistication represented by the astounding multi-media extravaganza of the scientific and industrial exhibitions. The progress of Europeans in South Africa was starkly contrasted with a lack of development on the part of the country's indigenous inhabitants. This is a text of legitimation in which the European civilising mission is foregrounded -- a theme which was reinforced in the mining display in which an interior of a native hut and crude surgery in the kraal were unfavourably contrasted with the modern native single quarters on a gold mine and the modern science of a mine native hospital (Rassool & Witz 1992:11). In this context, the icon of Van Riebeeck anchored a perceived dichotomy by having been seen to have saved 'the natives' by bringing civilisation and economic progress to the subcontinent.

The historical pageant at the festival was the first time such a medium was used to display a South African past. This took the form of a street pageant culminating in a

historical procession on the streets of Cape Town on 3 April and repeated the following day. Rassool and Witz record the monumental proportions of the spectacle: it took 70 floats, 400 horses, 132 drummers, 9 full brass bands and in total, 2000 participants to create this pageant of the past.

To allay fears that the content of the pageant would be biased, numerous scripts were drafted and checked by research students with the head of the History Department at Stellenbosch serving as a consultant on historical authenticity. The foci of the final pageant were the first and last floats. Leading the procession was the float which served to justify processes of conquest and settlement in South Africa entitled 'Africa Dark and Unknown':

> Masked figures, attired in black robes and shackled in chains, marched alongside the scene of a despotic figure who held them in 'mental and spiritual darkness'. One and a half hours later, in the final group of floats, "Africa Awakes' appeared. Presenting a contrasting image to 'Darkest Africa', it reinforced the notion of the benefits of settlement. The float contained a scene of figures dressed in white symbolising youth, strength and purity, the foundation on which rests the freedom of the individual and Africa as a whole" (Rassool & Witz 1992:14).

The intervening floats highlighted moments in this history of enlightenment which Rassool and Witz show to be a history "based on the co-operation of ruling classes in a history devoid of conflict": Boer and British generals rode alongside one another; a coach containing the last Transvaal president, Paul Kruger, followed shortly after a float depicting 'The Legacy of Rhodes' (Rassool & Witz 1992:15). The emphasis was on settler co-operation in the founding of the South African nation.

The nation and its history were conceived as exclusively white. Attempts by the festival organisers to promote separate festivities for blacks, coloureds and Malays were overwhelmed by mass resistance from blacks who argued that there was nothing to celebrate, but much about which to grieve (Smith 1988:157) . Resistance took the form of massive rallies held on 16 April 1952.[17]

[17] A speaker S.M.Molema, argued that "all the monuments, all the celebrations and all the feasts of the white man have a diametrically opposite meaning to the black man, because every monument of the white man perpetuates the memory of the annihilation of some black community, every celebration of victory the remembrance of our defeat, his every feast our famine and his laughter our tears. Such are the Great Trek celebrations and the Voortrekker Monuments; such are Dingaan's

Although also included in the pageant, Van Riebeeck's transcendental status as the founding father was given additional weight by a dramatization of his landing held on 5 April. On the beach at Granger Bay:

> Van Riebeeck stepped ashore with a party of actors, planted and hoisted a flag, took possession of the land, handed over gifts to a group of 'strandlopers' and was acclaimed as founding father. He also symbolically laid down a legacy of civilisation by handing over scrolls of religion, law, freedom, language, agriculture, industry and commerce, defence and the arts to the 'representatives of the people', all prominent dignitaries in the portals of power in South Africa. Solemn prayers were read and thousands of pigeons were released. From the beach, he was conveyed by coach to the Castle, where from the height of the balcony, he and his wife Maria. waved to the assembled crowd. Jan Van Riebeeck had acquired centre stage in South African history. He was imbued with almost messianic characteristics: the son of Europe, the father of white South Africa, the original bearer of civilisation, whose spirit endured in the emerging policiy of apartheid (Rassool & Witz 1992:17).

The fair and the pageant highlight key elements of a national history premised on the founding figure of Van Riebeeck which extends to the narrative constructed at the Castle. This history is constructed along a binary of progress and stasis, civilisation and stagnation, light and darkness. Progress is equated with civilisation, geographically located in Europe, and stasis with the savagery of Africa. Van Riebeeck is seen to have brought this light of progress with him to illuminate the Africans and redeem them from savagery. In this narrative, the Europeans (and especially the notion of the common man) are depicted as hardworking and heroic as they labour on the epic stage of History to build a Nation. 'The natives', on the other hand, are given the qualities of simple children. Effectively marginalised in the narrative except as the object of the destiny and calling of the Europeans, they are imbued with such qualities as simplicity and liveliness. They are presented as picturesque types, almost like animals who exhibit alleged distinctive behaviours among different tribal groups.

The driving mechanism of this conceptualisation of history is a double notion of Time as progress and as historically retrievable in the form of flashbacks. Within this

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Day, Kruger Day and Union Day and such are the approaching Van Riebeeck celebrations" (Smith 1988:1570).

scheme, History is shaped by the understanding that it is possible to recreate key historical moments.

The discussion of the Fine Arts exhibition in a section entitled "The Story the Exhibition tells" begins with what it designates as the "keynote" of the exhibition -- the seven portraits of the Van Riebeeck Family on loan by the Netherlands Government, including the famous Dirk Craey portrait included on the former South African paper currency until very recently. [18] On either side of 1652 were presented "a glance into a more remote period -- the actual discovery and naming of the Cape by the Portuguese" and on the other side of 1652, the association of Holland and Britain with the Cape (*Historical Exhibition of Arts* catalogue 1952:6-7). The earlier history is illustrated by a painting of *The Planting of a Cross by Bartholomeu Dias* by an untraced artist, Benda, and Charles Gow's portrait (*c.* 1835) of Vasco de Gama, copied from a 17th century portrait. That this is the history of the white nation was emphasised by the inclusion of a separate exhibition of Malay arts and crafts in another section of the Castle.

This account of the building of a nation as shown through pictures is produced less on the evidence of the images themselves than on assumptions internal to the historical discourse. An unmediated relationship is assumed between the artist-explorer as the eye of history and the so-called objective events of history: the artist is presented as a form of proto-camera. The theme of the "lively simplicity" (and by extension the inherent stagnation) of the "original tribes" is reiterated somewhat ambiguously in the writers' admiration for the "strength and courage" of the artists, who are portrayed as having had to brave the wilds in order to capture such invaluable information for posterity (*Historical Exhibition of Arts* catalogue 1952:5). The implication is that History recruits its own information and that had we been there we would have seen the same thing; the artist-historian's role is relegated to that of a *repetiteur* or scribe. Images and objects are read as flashbacks, as eminently transparent and historically

[18]Carmen asserts that this image, long considered to be the standard type for the likeness of Van Riebeeck , is now considered to be a likeness of Bartholomeus Vermuyden and not Van Riebeeck (Carman 1994:94).

recoverable, whether represented in the form of a human showcase, a pageant or a picture. An axiomatic logic can be detected in the assumption that the artist automatically records "great events, great deeds and great historical figures" (*Historical Exhibition of the Arts* catalogue 1952:5-6). This greatness can be seen to be more a function of the visibility and presence of the images than of any form of interpretative activity on the part of artist-historians, whose function is merely to record the passing historical pageant.

The edifying purpose of history as a record of uncontested, self-evident greatness is underlined in the display of examples of the "best craftsmanship" as opposed to "the flood of bad taste" deemed unworthy of the name of History.

A link between History, Civilisation and Progress is assumed to be natural. For Fehr, this was closely tied to a sense of moral purpose:

> There is much wisdom in the late Winston Churchill's remark that "Those who do not look far back will not be able to look far forward". This is perhaps especially true of our country, because, without the knowledge of the efforts of our forebears and the sacrifices they made to build up the country, in order to make it a safe and happy place for us to live in, we cannot form a balanced judgment of how to safeguard for ourselves and our children the blessing that flows from their toil and sacrifice, both in war and peace. It is the road by which we have come that this collection is designed to illustrate and if it should stir the imagination of some who come to view it, it cannot fail to engender a deep sense of pride in, and love for, our country (Fehr 1965:6).

Although the writers claim that certain images, particularly the early seascapes off the Cape, were made by people who had never been there, this narrative does not distinguish between the historical veracity of images made contemporaneously or after the fact. It is a history in which historical facts and representations of history are conflated. For example, in his book, *Treasures at the Castle of Good Hope*, Fehr writes, of the Benda painting made sometime in the 17th century at the earliest, that "we are fortunate in having a few pictorial records which go back to the years *before* settlement at the Cape" (Fehr 1973:9). This temporal narrative of "the road by which we have come" is unshakable in its belief in an objective, space of history made up of recoverable events.

This construction of the linear space of history relies on an elision of the mechanisms through which it ensures an illusion of objectivity. Carter suggests that imperial history is characterised by three main elements: a defensive appeal to cause and effect logic; the emergence of order from chaos; and a preference for fixed and detachable facts (actual houses, visible clearings, boats at anchor) . . . Empirical history of this kind has as its focus facts which in a sense, come after the event (Carter 1987:xvi). It is a description which does not simply reproduce events, but clarifies and orders them to create a sense of growing purpose: "for what is narrated is precisely those events indispensable to foundation" (Carter 1987:xv).

Carter argues that such history is a fabric woven of self-reinforcing illusions within one overarching illusion: that of the theatre and the unquestioned convention of the all-seeing spectator. The primary logic which holds this narrative together is that of visibility: "Nature's painted curtains are drawn aside to reveal heroic man at his epic labour on the stage of history . . . Processes of clearing, pitching tents, erecting dwellings are wholly ancillary to the main action [whose value] is to set a scene" (Carter 1987:xvii). Here this scene/seen is explicity stated as "the building of a nation" (*Historical Exhibition of the Arts* catalogue 1952:5). What is narrated, or seen to be narrated in this story, are precisely those activities indispensable to foundation. Planting a cross and coming in to anchor become historical events leading to other events linked by the logic of cause and effect. Framed thus, the narrating historian becomes a spectator like everybody else. It is not the historian who weaves events together to form a plot, but History itself. Table Bay becomes a stage and history, a theatrical performance.

As Carter points out, the descriptions of these historical events imply the presence of an indifferent, all-seeing spectator who could not have been there (Carter 1987:xvi). In the festival catalogue, 'the artist' is given this status, thus obscuring the multiplicity of circumstances and people involved, and that often the actual artist had never even been to Africa. Different people, whether here or in Europe, who made visual records

have been removed from the specificities of time and space and accorded a universal, transcendent unimplicated point of view.

Within this all-seeingness, why do the Khoikhoi fail to appear in the narrative, particularly given their centrality in all early travellers' encounters with Table Bay? During the latter half of the 17th century, a trend emerges in which representations of the Khoikhoi disappear from pictorial representations of Table Bay, to re-emerge later in the 18th century as scientific exhibits. There are a number of possible contextualisations for this which I explore in Chapter Three. In the Tercentenary narrative, these elisions are repeated: on the one hand, the Khoi receive gifts and passively witness Van Riebeeck planting the flag and being declared the founding father; on the other they are represented in the narrative as one of 'our colourful native tribes'. In both instances, the Khoi are denied their own positions; no access is given to how individuals perceived the world around them in radically different ways. The Khoi are written out of a narrative whose overriding theme of legitimation is the emergence of order from chaos or emptiness. It is a defensive appeal because the primary object of this history is not to understand or interpret but to legitimate possession of the land. In an act of epistemic violence, the embattled nature of the very histories represented is forgotten in the larger historical theatre in which these images now act.

The non-appearance of the Khoi in this narrative is linked to how indigenous people were written out of history on another level in the definition of the collector's term 'Africana'.[19] Bradlow writes that "the primary requisite of any object of Africana is that it must have some association with Southern Africa" (Bradlow 1975:3). He quotes Varley's definition of the term as

> all those objects large and small, natural and man-made, that relate to the history of Africa, and of southern Africa in particular, from Table Mountain -- shall we say -- to a piece of old

[19] The term Africana is still largely used by collectors; the earliest use of the term as defined above was in 1908 when the firm Davis and sons in Durban issued a catalogue entitled "Africana: a list of work (*sic*) dealing with South Africa" (*Africana Notes and News* September 1958). The use of the term came to be generally used by dealers, antiquarians and collectors after 1920. Although the term 'Americana' entered the Oxford English Dictionary from 1890, the term 'Africana' did not appear until 1971.

> Cape furniture, a Cape pamphlet, or a Bowler print. More specifically, we think of Africana in terms of human settlement in the subcontinent, but always in terms of history and the living past (Bradlow 1975:3).

The broad application of the term, however, does not seem to extend beyond the limits of European material culture in and of southern Africa. The question of cultural invisibility which Coetzee notes is built into the South African pastoral (Coetzee 1988:5), seems to apply equally to claims made for collecting categories like Africana by writers like Varley and Bradlow. While it certainly referred to images of indigenous inhabitants of southern Africa it did not extend to artefacts beyond the scope of colonial material culture at the Cape.

It could, however, include a living woman as in the case of Saartjie Baartman, the "Hottentot Venus", who was taken to England by a ship's surgeon in 1810, where she was exhibited both in England and on the continent in conditions so appalling that the Attorney-General intervened. She died in Paris where her cast and remains are preserved in the Musee de l'Homme, although applications are being made to bring her remains back to South Africa for a proper burial (*Cape Times* 10 April 1995).[20] The term Africana would seem to apply quite specifically to representations of southern Africa in or of which Europeans are sovereign. Thus it is apparent that even an apparently neutral collector's term contains hidden dynamics of power and control.

In this project I am less interested in what images and objects *say* than in what they *do*, beginning with the assertion that historical facts are not simply a given. Rather they need to be understood as the staged outcome of attitudes and assumptions of a history which subsumes spatial multiplicities within a universal framework in which space and time are treated as artefacts. The sheer knitted-together strength of this conception of space as absolute, and the political and social implications of this ideological construction in relation to public narratives of the William Fehr Collection at the Castle, form the focus of the second chapter of this project.

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[20] See *Africana Notes and News* vol vi:55-62 and vol x:124-134. See also E. Rankin on Penny Siopis's use of imagery of the Hottentot Venus in *The Baby and the Bathwater* (1992).

My interest is not to study how representational systems have been appropriated for political or propagandistic purposes; neither is it to decipher the ideological messages coded therein. Nor is it to interpret the exhibition, for to interpret it would be to assign it another level of meaning. In so doing, I am concerned to undercut my authorial role as the privileged voice of truth. My interest here is to show the dissimulation in imperialist history of what Spivak has termed "the mechanics of the constitution of 'facts'" (Spivak 1985:140 *cit.* Young 1990:159). I am interested to demonstrate the indeterminacy of the distinction between truth and fiction in relation to representations of the past, as well as to suggest, recall and develop forms of countermemory. In articulating the place and function of my object of study as a web of cultural practices, my aim is to call these practices into crisis in order to begin to transform them.

CHAPTER TWO

The myth of absolute space

> The problem of spatiality is that when a gaze from nowhere becomes a gaze from somewhere, it is possible to forget at times quite how problematic that somewhere might actually be (Keith & Pile 1993:31).
>
> [Space] tells you where you are and puts you there (Keith & Pile 1993:37).

In this chapter I argue that by challenging the empirical base on which imperial history rests it becomes possible to dissemble the illusion of imperialist mastery in public narratives of the William Fehr Collection. To do this I develop a model in which the centrality of absolute space in imperial narratives like the Tercentenary narrative is set against approaches focused on spatiality as a discursive strategy. To introduce the term in its broadest sense, spatiality implies multiple spaces and subject positions in contradistinction to the single point perspective of the imperial prospect.[1] I propose that spatial theory marks an effective way of challenging hegemonic discursive forms like empirical history without sliding into politically ineffectual forms of cultural relativism.

In the first chapter I discussed how the Collection at the Castle in Cape Town has been explained in terms of an official supremacist representation of the South African past articulated around the founding figure of Jan van Riebeeck and the date 1652. This ideological representation of history was first publicly asserted in the Tercentenary celebrations of 1952 commemorating the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck, necessitated, as I have discussed, by the need of the burgeoning apartheid state for an official history uniting all white settlers in a common heritage. This history not only retrieved Van Riebeeck from relative historical obscurity, but re-contextualised, and in some areas contradicted, the emphases of a partisan Afrikaner nationalist history

[1] See Keith & Pile's Introduction Part 1, pp.1-21 in Keith & Pile (eds) (1993).

produced forty years previously by champions of Afrikaner nationalism like Gustav Preller.

The Tercentenary narrative is an imperial narrative, I have argued, insofar as it can be seen to be characterised by three main elements: an appeal to cause and effect logic, the emergence of order from chaos and a preference for fixed and detachable facts. The primary logic of this construction rests on an appeal to visibility, implying the presence of a transcendent spectator who is understood to occupy a position outside time and space. This is a historical representation organised around the *mise-en-scene*: the illusion of the theatre and the unquestioned convention of the all-seeing spectator. What is narrated is a chronology of individually recoverable events organised around Progress as an animating principle with Civilisation at its apex: there is no fact or artefact that, once located in the framework of this teleology, does not contribute to the emergence of historical order and narrative clarity (Carter 1987:xix). It is a history in which the past has been settled even more effectively than the country.

The idea that history could be settled once and for all and that it is readily recoverable through facts and artefacts is, by and large, the product of a powerful conception of space inaugurated in the renaissance and consolidated during the enlightenment.[2] It was particularly powerful because it determined a new way of seeing, knowing and controlling the world that seemed to know no bounds. This conception revolutionised everyday life in that for the first time representational systems as diverse as, for example, natural history, image-making, land-management and History could apparently be seen to belong to the same order of knowledge.

[2] While apparently clear-cut separations between periods like renaissance, enlightenment or classical and modern do not constitute either a fixed schema or a teleology, they should not be considered as period generalisations but as traces of an overlapping series of discontinuous fields. Foucault's concept of the *episteme* is useful in its conception of history as a disconnected range of discursive practices which taken together, form a culture's *archive* or *episteme*. These practices interrelate and work with or against each other in a state of constant flux so that meaning is continually defined and redefined. However, within this constant flux of meaning, Foucault discerns large-scale congruence in the intellectual activity of certain periods (see Foucault 1977).

The general applicability of this framework masked the fact that different representations construct subjects in society in different ways. At the time of the enlightenment, there was an overriding need to construct visible, governable subjects by making these different systems work together in the articulation and development of what Harvey has called "rationalised structures" (Harvey 1989:240).[3] Enlightenment science was not the science now understood by modern positivists; it was a *cosmopolis* which gave a comprehensive account of the world, so as to bind things together in political-theological (*polis*) as much as in scientific or explanatory (*cosmographical*) terms (Toulmin 1990:128). This is well-illustrated by the role of the enlightenment museum as a cultural laboratory in which the meanings of objects were subsumed and reassembled within a finite, totalizing order of European making. Enlightenment science travelled well, allowing for the incorporation of all things within a pre-existing schema, thereby validating its universal applicability while entrenching its hegemony. The political implications of this framework have been challenged throughout this century; postmodernists generally agree that the Enlightenment model as a basis for knowledge is in deep crisis.

This chapter is about different historically constructed ways of describing and writing about space and about why it is important to examine the theoretical underpinnings of hegemonic conceptions of space in the first place. In order to understand how a particular language of space underpins museological narratives like the Tercentenary narrative necessitates an understanding of how this language came to be developed and implemented by Europeans to "[create] a new kind of Eurocentred planetary consciousness" (Pratt 1992:68). In recruiting images of Table Bay, for example, in a sequential narrative of imperial possession, the Tercentenary narrative implies that its historical space is equal to pictorial space which is again equal to the space of the museum. This construction achieves hegemony by eliding the multiple spatialities and subject positions of these different discursive orders.

[3] This recalls Foucault's conception of the disciplinary society -- in particular see *Discipline and Punish* (1977).

Having explained how the concept of absolute space came to be elevated to the status of a universal science, I go on to deal with some of the ways in which the language of space has been and is being reformulated. Although space has always been central in both art and physics, it is significantly in the realm of radical geography that some of the fuller implications of spatial theory are currently being realised. Geographers like Harvey, Massey and Soja have been at the forefront of efforts to reassert the importance of space (and place) in critical theory.[4] Their ideas are being used in fruitful and innovative ways across fields ranging from cultural and literary studies to analyses of changing political and economic forms which extend from the local to the global. This body of theory is influenced by Lefebvre, the French Marxist philosopher.[5] His major philosophical work, *The Production of Space* (1974, first published in English in 1991) articulated a grammar for social space by drawing attention to the complex nature of the production of space.

The key mechanisms of imperial history -- the reliance on chronology or temporality as a major structuring device, and the construction of the viewer who exists outside of space and time -- rely on a contradictory double illusion of space as opaque *and* transparent (see Soja 1989:7, 122-6). The illusion of opaqueness regards space as fixed, dead and undialectical in relation to time which moves across space.[6] Time and space are constructed as binaries with time as the privileged signifier. Within the same formulation, however, it is suggested that because absolute space can always be known and mapped, within the spatial realm the known and the transparent are one and the same thing (see Lefebvre 1991). Rose suggests that this visuality is more than

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[4] See particularly their individual contributions to Bird *et al* (eds.) (1993) & Keith & Pile (eds.) (1993). See also Soja (1989) and Harvey (1989).

[5]Originally associated with the surrealists from whom he developed a concern with dialectical logic, Lefebvre's *Dialectical Materialism* (1938) became a standard text for French Marxists. After the war he bagan to reflect on a new object of study which he called 'daily life'; this lead him to an interest in urbanism and theories of architecture. *La Production de 'espace* marks a convergence of these themes (see Soja (1991) Henri Lefebvre, 1901-1991. In *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 9.*)

[6] Tarantino cites a description by Deleuze: Bergson's first thesis is that movement is distinct from the space covered. The latter is past; the former is present in than it refers to the act of covering. While the space covered is infinitely divisible, movement on the other is indivisible. This presupposes a more complex idea -- that while movements are heterogeneous, spaces belong to a single, identical, homogeneous space (Tarantino 1989:95).

the domain of simple recognition in that it is used as a metaphor for seeing the world *as it really is* (Rose 1993:71, my emphasis). Geographers, for example, look in order to know and what this entails is a particular notion of space. In claiming transparency and universality, this representation elides spatiality by repressing any difference from itself.

Part of the difficulty with the concept of absolute space is that it has become so infused with commonsense definitions of space as to mark everyday language in ways that mask these hidden power relationships. Beneath the appearance of commonsense and seemingly natural ideas about space and time and the discourses supported by these conceptualisations, lie hidden terrains of ambiguity, contradiction and struggle. Another difficulty in talking about space is related to the fact that space has no distinctive content (Wilkinson 1993:155). There are many classes, types and uses of space: to talk of space is to enter an ongoing debate at the heart of philosophical enquiry. Harvey asserts that the concept of space has been marked by strong epistemological breaks and reconstructions and that any given social formation can be seen to embody its own distinctive bundle of time and space practices and concepts (Harvey 1989:204).

The representation of space as absolute has a very specific history, but one which was slow to unfold because of the piecemeal processes which shaped it (Harvey 1989:244). Prefigured in Euclid's geometry and Ptolemy's grid, absolute space was widely established in Europe and European colonies between the 17th and 19th centuries. The discovery of linear perspective in Florence by Brunelleschi and Alberti in the 1430s and the importation of Ptolemy's map from Alexandria to Florence around 1400 mark the emergence of a radical reconstruction of space and time in the Western world.[7] These two devices -- which were to be consolidated by the

[7] Harvey argues that before this external space was weakly grasped and generally conceptualised as a mysterious cosmology populated by some external authority, heavenly hosts or more sinister figures of myth and imagination (Harvey 1989:240).

theoretical and scientific formulations of Newton, Descartes and Kant[8] -- underpinned the transparency of the classical system of representation. Transparency is not the same as illusionism in that maps, for example, do not simulate visual experience. Rather it means that every element of the image refers to something that apparently exists independently of its representation, thus designating a perfect equivalence between reality and its representation.

This strategy, however, relied on a mechanism of concealment. Meaning literally "seeing through", *per-specere*, the invention of single-point perspective attained trans-parency only by effacing the image's material support (Owens 1982:9). Right from the time of its initial formulation, "the canvas as support and surface is *simultaneously posited and neutralized* -- it is technically and ideologically assumed to be transparent" (Owens 1982:17, emphasis in the original).

Marin points out that two apparently incompatible modes -- painting-as-window and painting-as-mirror -- provide the foundation upon which the classical system of representation was erected. (In fact they are not incompatible in the crucial sense that both posit an implied viewing position that is elevated, distant and outside plastic or sensory reach). The first axiom relies on the eye/I who occupies the vantage point in the system of single-point perspective and in substituting representations for things, claims the representation as a mode of *the viewer's* vision or thought. In the second axiom, this subjective viewer disappears and the world seems to represent itself without the intervention of an artist or historian. Nobody is speaking here. Events seem to narrate themselves. This subject has been taken out of space and time to act as a transcendent, objective mind that appropriates reality for itself, and by appropriating it, dominates it. Representation is thus defined as appropriation and is thereby constituted as an apparatus of power.

[8] See particularly Massey's critique (1993) of Newton's model in 'Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place', iIn Bird *et al* (eds.) (1993). See also Smith & Katz in Keith & Pile (eds.) (1993), p. 79.

Referring to the origins of perspective in the Renaissance, Cosgrove recalls the historical parallels between its emergence in European painting and the contemporaneous development of the modern theatre as a formal art wherein scenes are composed of regulated space and illusory settings (Cosgrove 1984:20). In the same period descriptive geography presented the varied terrestrial scenes encountered and/or imagined on the voyages of discovery. All these practices served to reinforce an illusion of ordered human activity within a controlled space subtended to the (monocular) eye of the single observer as the static centre of the (visible) world.

The connection between individualism and representation is significant in that this link provided an effective foundation for the later development of Cartesian principles of rational empiricism which rely on the separation between subject and object. Lefebvre notes that for most historians of Western thought, the thinking of Descartes (1596-1650) is viewed as the decisive point in the working-out of the concept of space and the key to its mature form. The Aristotelian tradition viewed space and time as categories, the status of which remained unclear. With the advent of Cartesian logic space entered the realm of the absolute: "as Object opposed to Subject, as *res extensa* opposed to and present to, *res cogitans*, space came to dominate, by containing them, all senses and all bodies" (Lefebvre 1991:1).

The objectivity seemingly afforded by perspective rules applied equally to Renaissance cartography. Like perspective, the design of a grid to locate places on the globe as a whole rested on an illusion of the human eye looking at it from outside. Unlike special-purpose maps like the portolan charts, the Ptolemaic grid furnished a geometrical framework for comprehending the whole world. Harvey writes that the Ptolemaic grid, like linear perspective, offered "an immediate and mathematical unity in which the most far-flung places could be precisely fixed in relation to one another by unchanging co-ordinates so that their proportionate distance, as well as their directional relationships would be apparent . . . [This system] provided cartography with an expandable tool for collecting, collating and correcting geographical knowledge" (Harvey 1989:245).

Two significant implications follow from this: an ability to see the globe as a knowable totality and the implication that mathematical principles could determine the representation of three-dimensional space in two dimensions. "As a result, it seemed as if space, though infinite, was conquerable and containable for purposes of human action" (Harvey 1989:246). The conquest and control of space required that space be conceived of as something useable, malleable and therefore capable of domination through human action. Perspective and mathematical mapping did this by conceiving of space as abstract, homogeneous and usable in its qualities and as a stable, knowable framework for thought. Euclidean geometry was the basis of this language which extended beyond two-dimensions to mathematical applications with relevance to builders, engineers, architects and land managers. The latter converted Euclidean representations of objectively conceived space into a spatially ordered physical landscape with fixed co-ordinates. The usefulness of this geometry to control movement and define domains of possession also rendered it indispensable to merchants, landowners, tax assessors, colonial administrators and global commercial enterprises like the various European East and West India Companies. Harvey adds that there is also evidence to connect the formulation of the rules of perspective with the rationalising of practices emerging in commerce, banking, book-keeping, trade and agricultural production under centralised land-management (see Harvey 1989:245).

These practices were widely used from the beginning of the 17th century by the Dutch East and West India Companies, for example, in their attempts to build an international empire to monopolise the trade in American and Asian goods. Officials of the Dutch East and West India Companies were meticulous keepers of diaries, ledgers and inventories whose primary function was to document the spatial distribution of bodies, commodities and things. At the Cape, for example (as elsewhere in Dutch colonial towns in the Americas), Hall has shown how the VOC (Dutch East India Company) employed basic Renaissance geometric forms to convert the wild landscape to a civilised townscape (see Hall 1991:41-57). As elsewhere,

earliest urban design at the Cape consisted of a grid street plan, forming regular rectangular blocks from the intersections of streets at right angles, and a geometrically planned fort (Hall 1991:44). It is apparent that, rather than being an architectural design that took into account local landscape and conditions, these plans were an idealised solution: an application of engineering theory (Hall *et al* 1990:24). With the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Dutch war (1664-7), the *Heren XVII* decided to replace Van Riebeeck's earthen, quadrilateral fort with a new pentagonal fort.[9] For additional defence, a line of outposts were constructed some distance from the town. "Cape Town could not hope to be a city on water, but the channeled streams falling from Table Mountain allowed remembrance of the canals of the Netherlands. Streets such as Heerengracht, Buitengracht and Zeestraat divided the town into rectangular *erven* which were allocated for houses and warehouses" (Hall 1991:45). In Chapter Three, I suggest that it was through the symbolic organisation of space that the VOC attempted to govern the economics, demographics and behaviours of individuals who were assigned positions within these spaces. (In the case of the Cape, these spatial structures were largely defensive in origin, both against the threat of other European powers and the indigenous peoples and animals of the African subcontinent).

The consolidation of rationalised structures of power during the 17th and 18th centuries mark the emergence of the enlightenment programme. During this time Foucault argues that the disciplines or methods that divided and controlled the time, space and movement of individuals (and which had long been in existence in the armies, monasteries and workshops) now became general formulae for domination and control (Foucault 1977:137). Foucault argues that these techniques of power operated through hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and examination through technologies that surveyed, classified and controlled time, space, bodies and things. Through separation and observation, differences became visible and therefore classifiable. Renaissance structures of similitude as the basis for knowledge were cut

[9] Like Fort Amsterdam on Curacao, this was to incorporate the governor's residence, a church and military and civil offices (see Hall 1991:44-45).

away in a new attempt to discover a more scientific approach to the classification of things along the lines of perspective and geometry:

> The classificatory table emerged as the basic structure of knowledge, with the new rationality grounding itself in the identification of differences between things, based on measurement and order. Classified and tabulated series were drawn up. Things were no longer placed in unifying categories, explained in erudite or magical ways, but began to be drawn apart from each other, placed in differentiating categories (Hooper-Greenhill 1989:65).

This extended to the arrangement of individuals in space. Through the organisation of cells, places and ranks, the disciplines create complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical. "Spaces fix positions and permit circulations; they mark places and assign values . . . The division of spaces and bodies entailed the establishment of records: day-books, ledgers, inventories, filing cabinets, archives were all required to document the spatial distribution of bodies and things" (Hooper-Greenhill 1989:62). This epistemological table functioned as both a technique of power and a procedure of knowledge.

This system had important implications for the production and appropriation of museum spaces as cultural laboratories specifically dedicated to public edification. Foucault asserts that at around the time of the French Revolution, the intensely private collections housed in the palaces of kings and princes and the homes of scholars were reorganised into public collections. These newly organised collections allowed for the formation of an intersecting curatorial gaze (Hooper-Greenhill 1989:67). New technologies like the Linnean system of classification enabled this large-scale spatialization in which collections were gathered together and reorganised onto a universal classificatory table.

The reorganisation of the epistemological table transformed the meanings of objects within the collections by ostensibly attributing to them universal meaning within the space of the museum. Power relations within the museum (and particularly the relationship of the museum to the status quo) became masked by a commitment to democracy and public utility. This agenda was entrenched in the second half of the

19th century when these tendencies which had been evident in emerging museums were promoted officially.[10]

Absolute space was a concept supremely appropriate for the project of social domination and the expansion of European hegemony through the conquest, colonisation and defence of new territories (Smith & Katz 1993: 75) both literally and metaphorically. As the space of the world became increasingly fragmented through the work of disciplines and their discourses, the travelling scientist began to usurp the mythical function of travel and utilise it in the service of universal knowledge. This self-effacing leap from the particular to the universal was increasingly aimed at defining a particular space according to universal knowledge, as well as the passages which grant access to this space (Noyes 1992:193). Fabian notes how in the wake of the enlightenment, travellers' mostly sentimental and aestheticising tales of travel came increasingly to be subsumed under the reigning paradigm of natural history. Thus travel too became an instrument for the acquisition of a knowledge structured according to tabular space:

> In the episteme of natural history the exercise of knowledge was projected as the filling of spaces or slots in a table, or the marking of points in a system of coordinates in which all possible knowledge could be placed (Fabian 1984:8 *cit.* Noyes 1992:193).

But the differentiations of space within this classificatory table provided a language by which space could be captured only as an elision: "as a mode of writing which not only represents or reflects the physical world, but produces relations within it . . . this amounts to a writing about the earth, taking the earth as its object and banishing it in the act of signification" (Noyes 1989:52). Transparent space hides what it depends on for its meaning: an other. In this dualistic structure of meaning, knowledge of lucid transparent space is made sense of only in contrast to a notion of place as an

[10] These tendencies may be reduced to four principal characteristics which cluster round the definition of a museum: that collections on display should in some way contribute to the advancement of knowledge through study of them; by extension, collections should not be arbitrarily arranged, but should be organised according to some systematic and recognisable scheme of classification; they should be owned and administered not by a private individual, but by more than one person on behalf of the public and they should be reasonably accessible to the public, if necessary by special arrangement and on payment of a fee (Vergo (ed.) 1989:8).

unknowable. That other is articulated as a spatial paradox, a territory defined by its lack of definition which it becomes the Europeans' task to make visible.

This paradox is central to the founding text of colonial discourse theory: Said's *Orientalism* (1978). In this book, Said drew on Foucault's *oeuvre* to argue that the West invented the Orient through a complex set of representations. These representations came to constitute not simply an imaginary place in the imperial mind's eye, but, more significantly, a textual space which travellers, colonists and writers inhabited in order to communicate. This representation, Said argued, hinges on a Western construction of a primitive other in opposition to its civilised self. I argue in this chapter that this construction relies on a binary operation in which the other is conceptualised both as timeless (opaque) and infinitely knowable (transparent), while the latter is imbued with superior qualities of temporality. Although Said's argument seems to pose more difficulties than it solves[11], it highlighted the question of how colonial discourse imagined a disarticulated, displaced other in order to establish a sense of its own limits, and hence its internal stability. It was a hegemonic view because it articulated different versions of the world -- including those of the colonised -- in such a way that their differences were neutralised.

Absolute space posits a series of false unities located in a concept of space as opaque and transparent and whose central aim is to elide difference and multiplicity. To write about difference thus becomes a question of conceptualising space -- and hence history -- differently.

One of the ways of undermining the role of history as an empirical and transcendental reality to which access can be gained is to move towards conceptualising history "as a form of understanding" (Young 1990:22). This view distinguishes between the *events* of the past and the historical *facts* constructed out of them through the act of interpretation (Hutcheon 1989:57). As an interpretative activity, history becomes

[11] See Chapter 7 of Young (1990) and Vaughan (1994).

subject to all the complexities involved with representation, interpretation and narrative (Young 1990:22).

This affects the status of historical documents, images and public narratives which can no longer be seen as neutral and objective, but as value-laden interpretations of historical events. White affirms this in his definition of the historical work as "a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model or icon of past structures and processes in the interest of explaining what they were by representing them" (White 1983:2). The view that the historiographer can gain access to 'what really happened' in the past rests on the assumption that "language can serve as a perfectly transparent medium of representation, and that if one can only find the right language for describing events, the meaning of events will *display* itself to consciousness" (White 1978:130).

Conceiving of history as a text and not a universal, totalizing strategy allows historical meanings to be reassessed as "unstable, contextual, relational and provisional" (Hutcheon 1989:67). This history is a field of material acts involving suppression, repetition, subordination and highlighting (Hutcheon 1989:67), as well as negligence, forgetfulness, concealment and misunderstanding (Viljoen 1993:3). Both are subject to the density, opacity and mediacy of language (Viljoen 1993:3). Neither order is closed, nor readily accessible; both are continually being displaced into a network of heterogeneous connections and disseminating references.

As a text operating within a field of difference, history can begin to be understood in Derrida's terms as "no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself" (Derrida:84 *cit.* Viljoen 1993:3). However, this is not to imply that histories can be reduced to a disposable fiction. Questions of identity, agency and memory are intimately bound up with representations of the past for how the past is presented is an ideological battleground. In constituting and appropriating the other as the same, "History is the realm of violence and war" (Young 1990:15).

From the absolute space of Cartesian logic to postmodern hyperspace, changing representations of space and time provide a framework whereby individuals are interpellated into society in various ways. Noyes argues that "to think about space is to produce a space in which specific modes of unity seem to prevail. Not only *space* itself, but also the knowledge of space are such unities . . . Furthermore, subjectivity and its relation to the social order are also such unities"(Noyes 1992:51). This is why it is crucial to move away from an analysis of *things in space* to understanding why and by what means spaces and subjectivities are created, organised, dominated or displaced. Histories like the Tercentenary narrative interpellate subjectivities by anchoring various seemingly unified spatial forms (like images, collections,national monuments, viewers and the subjects of representations) to the social world in such a way that a one-to-one correspondence is established between representations of a place and its alleged reality. Where and how the collection is displayed, who is understood to be speaking and to whom (in the form of tours and pamphlets) contribute to the production of cultural spaces through which identities are both produced and expressed.

The apparent homogeneity of the space of imperial history elides differences within its own internal construction. Spaces and stories of artefacts or pictures are not the same as *any* of those of maps, cities, buildings, museums or bodies, nor of the wealth of heterogeneous sources comprising accounts of the past. In any event none of these phenomena can ever be frozen. Keith and Pile, echoing de Certeau, argue that this is because every story is a travel story or spatial practice in which the spatialised syntax is frequently not obvious, even if it is invariably present (if only as an absence). "Just as all knowledge on closer inspection is both empowered and restrained by its situated generation, all narratives can be unpacked to reveal the frequently implicit spatialities that they evoke, varying from the mundane to the contradictory" (Keith & Pile 1993:16). While teleologies order, exclude and prioritise events according to the internal logic of chronology, in space things next to each other are not necessarily

connected. Elements of the chaotic and dislocated are intrinsic to the spatial which resists totalizing discursive strategies.[12]

Hesse writes that not only do the articulation of times and spaces mark the identification of politics and cultural identities as resistant to any form of totalizing theoretical practice, "the point of this observation is one of its corollaries: time and space subvert theoretical practice" (Hesse 1993:162). Hesse argues that we can only encounter or place events or experiences from other narratives if we can remember them in time or accord them a relevant space. This is difficult because the demands of narrative -- as more significant as product than production -- recruit events as sequential. The uni-directional, homogeneous space of sequential narrative creates a stage which nullifies time's cultural dimensions: "chronology is the temporal counterpart of Euclidean space: both are operationally efficient because they deny the historical [and multiple] nature of the realms they manipulate" (Carter 1987:xix).[13]

Carter contrasts the positivist bias of imperial history's preference for the 'facts' of forts and clearings by recognising the spatiality of historical actions. Imperial history

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[12] Harvey questions how the elision of space in theory could have gone unremarked for so long. He suggests that it is a tribute to the compartmentalizations of western thought and also to a bias in social theory towards processes of social change, modernisation and revolution. Progress has been its theoretical object and historical time its primary dimension -- "indeed, progress entails the conquest of space, the tearing down of all spatial barriers and the ultimate 'annihilation of space through time' ... Since modernity is about the experience of progress through modernisation, writings on the theme have tended to emphasise temporality, the process of *becoming*, rather than *being* in space and place" (Harvey 1989:205).

[13] Despite a shift in political objectives and critical methods, a danger for anti-colonial discourse is that in an attempt to redress an imbalance, writers often simply reverse the terms of the debate without analysing the internal architecture of the colonial argument. This is particularly true where singularities of class, race or gender are used as primary conceptual and organisational categories. Soja and Hooper point out that while there have been fruitful dialogues between radical movements like Marxism and feminism, the deeply ingrained essentialisms of modernist identity politics have tended to resist seeing the world as populated by "multiple subjects with many (often changeable) identities located in varying (and also changeable) subject positions. Hence, modernist identity politics, in its fear and rejection of a fragmented reality, has often tended to create and intensify political divisiveness rather than working toward a multiple, pluralized, and yet still radical conceptualization of agency and identity" (Soja and Hooper 1993:187).
A limited and traditional reliance on categories that appear to offer secure points of identification is undermined by views that, at other times and places, cause these categories to be read in entirely different ways. The apparent unity of conceptual categories elides the apparatus through which boundaries of sense are preserved.

implies that the bay and country were already there, ignoring that they were brought into being as geographical objects under specific historical conditions by specific people -- *that spatial history had to constitute them.* If, for example, Table Bay already existed as a place, the significance of discovering it would be rendered redundant. Thus, Carter adds, the activities of exploring and settling which nationalism elevates to an iconic status become strictly superfluous. "Treating the historical space as 'natural', 'passive', 'objectively there' has the effect of draining what is most characteristic of [the country's] history of its historical content" (Carter 1987:xxi).

The cause and effect logic of imperial history reads historical events as sources for theatrical plots and in so doing, excludes precisely what distinguishes these sources: "their active engagement with the road or horizon" (Carter 1987:xxii). Carter asserts that the true subject of history is not its physical object but its cultural ones, that is, not the 'facts' of forts and clearings but the directions or distances in which forts or clearings may be found (Carter 1987:xxiv). What is evoked in spatial history are the "spatial forms and fantasies through which a culture declares its presence" (Carter 1987:xxii). This becomes clearer by looking, for example, at how maps work.

Cartography is a metaphorical operation in that it uses one spatial system (that of cartography) to define another (that of so-called real space). Metaphors work by invoking a more familiar meaning system to explain or clarify another meaning system: in so doing, metaphors assist in reducing the unfamiliar event, experience or social relation by reinscribing it within a known framework (Smith & Katz 1993:69).[14] Metaphor is quite literally a spatial figure of speech in that in a static sense, metaphor stands in for or in place of something else -- in this way, it makes what was invisible, opaque or only dimly perceptible emerge before our eyes. Maps shape space by

[14] Smith and Katz argue that while "the appeal of metaphor lies precisely in the new meanings that metaphors impart", to realise the fullest implications of spatial metaphors necessitates an understanding of how metaphors work as a bridge between different spatial realms. They suggest that the lack of distinction between different forms and usages of space often leads to an undifferentiated fusion of material and metaphorical space. This appearance of false unity needs to be challenged (Smith & Katz 1993:68).

giving the traveller a sense of position, direction and scale in relation to other positions represented by points within the space of the map. "In a mobile sense, metaphor carries meaning over, brings distant things near or even runs alongside normal uasage on a parallel track" (Carter 1987:30).

Yet maps inhabit an ambiguous space -- on the one hand, they help to stabilise and centre domains of power through their apparent command of space. But, at the same time, maps do not mirror the appearance of natural objects, but preserve the trace of encountering them:

> Despite its *tabula rasa* appearance, the map was, from the beginning designed to record particular information. As the spaces of the grid were written over, there was revealed a palimpsest of the explorer's experience, a criss-cross of routes gradually thickening and congealing into fixed seas and lands. Whereas with (Linnean) botany, the nature of the discovering process was concealed or elided, . . . whereas the blank space of the botanical plate was dead, the blank spaces of the map were active, locating future histories (Carter 1987:23).

Maps are an incomplete form of representation. While they may help to construct closed narratives, they are not in themselves closed, though they may appear so. Maps interact with the places they represent to help bring forth the history they would in time come to embody. The state, for example, in its modern and pre-modern forms, evolved together with the map as an instrument of polity, to assess taxes, wage war, facilitate communications and exploit strategic resources (see Wood 1992). Maps are active agents in helping to impose the reality they pretend to mirror (Harley & Zandvliet 1992:17).

As maps have grown timeless and been incorporated into the rational world of science, it is easy to forget how historical time was predicated on historical space. This relationship was made clearer in early maps in which dates can be found on sight lines. Retrieving the historical relationship between maps and landscapes at this time does more than blur the 19th century distinction between art and science; it affirms the spatial nature of history and the role played by images in the production of space. Carter writes that it is necessary to recover "the sense in which language did not simply delimit, but made a difference. We have to disperse the myth of spontaneous,

theatrical settlement and linear progress, and to demonstrate the dialectical nature of foundation, the sense in which the new country was a rhetorical construction, a product of language and the intentional gaze, not of the detached, dictionary grasping spectator" (Carter 1987:36). At the same time we have to try to extract from the temporal orders of cartography and imperial history the relationship between the delimitation of territory and the projection of desire.

Carter's spatial history provides a model whereby history is not regarded as a closed and fixed body of understandings, but as an open-ended and dialectical mode of enquiry which inserts the uniqueness of spatial experience back into history.

Lefebvre argues a similar point in a different way. He describes absolute space as one which has "homogeneity as its goal, its orientation and its lens" (Lefebvre 1991:287). He suggests, however, that this kind of space (as the dominant space of capitalism) carries within it the seeds of a new kind of space. He calls this space "*differential space*. . . . because inasmuch [as absolute space tends] towards the elimination of exisiting differences or peculiarities, a new space cannot be born (produced) unless it accentuates differences" (Lefebvre 1991:49-52, my emphasis). Lefebvre suggests that within the apparent homogeneity of absolute space are the traces of differences through which absolute space asserts its omnipotence in the first place.

In *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre highlights interconnections between experience, perception and imagination in the construction of social spaces. He does this by offering a framework in which complexities of interrelationships through which spaces (whether material or conceptual) are produced, can be considered together without losing a sense of their varying specificities. To do this he presents a triadic formulation which stresses the dialectical interplay between how social spaces are constructed in a material sense; how they are represented in discourse; and how they are used in turn as symbolic representations in contemporary culture.

The first area he terms that of spatial practice. These practices involve the material production and reproduction of space in the context of how people move across the earth, as in, for example the locations and interactions of and between daily realities and urban realities, and the routes and networks linking up places set aside for work, private life and leisure. Such routes are drawn by bodies. De Certeau evokes an image implied here of a story which begins at ground level with footsteps in the city defining "spaces of enunciation . . . Their intertwined paths give their shape to spaces, weaving places together" (De Certeau 1984:103 *cit.* Harvey 1989:213). Lefebvre argues that "a spatial practice must have a certain cohesiveness, but this does not imply that it is coherent (in the sense of intellectually worked out or logically conceived)" (Lefebvre 1991:38). While these practices generally weave in and out of (and may be incorporated into) the geometrical or geographical spaces of visual, panoptic or theoretical constructions, Lefebvre argues that they can be identified as a separate set of practices.

The second area Lefebvre labels as representations of space or the conceptual place of architects, scientists, planners and so on. This space is the dominant space or mode of production, a space of intellectually worked out signs and symbols like geometries, geographies and imperial histories. Such signs and symbols range from plans of buildings to scientific and ideological knowledge of the body as in anatomy, physiology, sickness and cure and knowledge of the body in relation to nature and with its surroundings or milieu. This space is the space to which ideology refers, "a space it describes, whose vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose code it embodies" (Lefebvre 1991:44). Lefebvre here uses the example of the Christian church and enquires what would remain of the church if there were no churches or designated places where people could meet in order to worship. "More generally speaking", Lefebvre continues, "what we call ideology only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and its production, and by thus taking on body therein. Ideology *per se* might be said to consist primarily in a discourse upon social space". This last statement suggests a link between spatial practice and representations of space in the realm of order. Lefebvre suggests that representations of space have a

substantial role in the production of space as spatial *textures*. This relationship can be conceived as an intervention that occurs by way of construction conceived not as a building of a particular structure but "as a project embedded in a spatial context" (Lefebvre 1991:44).

The third space described by Lefebvre is that of representational spaces: if representations of space inhabit the realm of ideology, representational spaces are the lived spaces of culture. These are the spaces of the imaginary, the symbolic and the unconstrained, the spaces of inhabitants and users. Primarily these are the spaces of individuals and groupings of people, involving the lived experience of the often chastised body. These are the spaces which "overlay physical space, making symbolic use of its objects" (Lefebvre 1991:44) -- the spaces of childhood memories and dreams (studied by ethnologists, anthropologists and psychoanalysts), and the spaces evoked by bedrooms, dwellings, houses, graveyards, churches and squares, for example as spaces which "embrace the loci of passion, action and lived situations" (Lefebvre 1991:45). Lefebvre suggests that with certain exceptions, such spaces tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs, including artworks, fabrics and written texts.

Lefebvre argues that both representations of space and representational spaces are abstract but they obey different rules. Whereas the former space establishes relations between objects and people, representational spaces need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness. Students of the latter spaces, Lefevre argues, often "forget to set them alongside those representations of space which coexist, concord or interfere with them; they even more frequently ignore social practice" (Lefebvre 1991:41).

All three of these areas contribute in different ways to the production of space in a dialectical interrelationship that is never either simple or stable. Lefebvre argues that history needs to acknowledge not only the genesis of these three broadly conceived forms of space but especially their interconnections, distortions, displacements and

mutual interactions (Lefebvre 1991:42). Very rarely, Lefebvre suggests, do these spatial realms constitute a coherent whole.

The conceptual richness of Lefebvre's notions of the spatial provide a valuable springboard for spatial theory, although Keith and Pile warn against applying this template too rigidly. They argure the need to be aware of falling prey "to the myth of immanence, the notion that at each historical moment space is dominated by one (produced) set of meanings" (Keith & Pile 1993:25). They add that the emphasis on succession in Lefebvre's work tends towards such historicism. While space is produced in the image of capital, it can be reappropriated in the symbolic vocabulary of liberation; ways in which meanings of museological discourse can and have been transformed (and spaces reinvented) form the subject of the fourth chapter of this project. It is also important to bear in mind that it would be counter-productive to replace one particular definition of space with an infinite number of forms of spatiality, all of equal significance.

Lefebvre's work is significant for the value it places on spatialities as simulaneously real and metaphorical. He suggests that the metaphoric and the real do not belong in separate worlds and that the symbolic and the literal are in part constitutive of one another (Keith & Pile 1993:23). His descriptions fracture the illusory nature of absolute space by showing how meanings are created through a layering and crossing over of a number of spatial practices (thereby prefiguring Bhabha's interstitial and Said's contrapuntal methods[15]). But, as Derrida (1976:24), for example, has suggested, any articulation of identity or object formation is only momentarily complete, as it is always in part constituted by the forces that oppose it and always contingent upon surviving the contradictions that it subsumes. "In such a fragile world of identity formation and object formation, political subjects are articulated through moments of closure that create subjects as surfaces of inscription, mythical and metaphoric, invariably incomplete" (Keith & Pile 1993:27) .

[15] See Bhabha's introduction to *The Location of Culture* (1994:2) and Chapter One of Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

Contrary to absolute space it may be argued that simultaneously present in any apparent conceptual, formal or ideological unity (like landscapes or imperial narratives, for example) are multiple enunciations of distinct and different forms of space. The sense in imperial histories like the Tercentenary narrative that the past has been settled once and for all can be challenged by deploying a spatialized, political language. These tactics are not those of categorical inversion, but of decentring the hegemony of the ideological construction of the imperial prospect. Soja and Hooper suggest that as critical thinkers "we must all be historians, geographers and social analysts" (Soja & Hooper 1993:200). This involves an acknowledgement of the (social and spatial) making of histories, the social production of human geographies and the (spatio-temporal) constitution of social practices and relations (Soja & Hooper 1993:200). Neither experiences nor meanings are pre-discursive; there are no identities outside of contexts. In moving towards a sense in which vocabularies of (singular) space are refigured in terms of the (plural) spatialities they connote, it becomes possible to explode hegemonic constructions of places, histories and identities like those of public narratives of the William Fehr Collection at the Castle.

CHAPTER THREE

First Sight
Seventeenth-century colonial inventions of Table Bay

> The task of ideology is to present the position of the subject as fixed and unchangeable, an element in a given system of differences which is human nature and the world of human experience, and to show possible action as an endless repetition of normal 'familiar' action (Belsey 1980:90).
>
> At the centre (of colonial discourse) is not a single homogenizing perspective but a polarity: it is on the one hand, a topic of learning, discovery, practice; on the other, it is the site of dreams, images, fantasies, myths, obsessions and requirements (Bhabha 1983:199 *cit.* Young 1990:141).

Images of Table Bay are well represented in the Collection at the Castle and Rust en Vreugd owing to William Fehr's interest in this genre. The Collection contains some of the earliest known examples of paintings of Table Bay in South Africa, although little is known of the circumstances in which they were produced.[1] As the cornerstone of a linear, supremacist narrative, the founding of South Africa on the shores of Table Bay may appear within the Fehr Collection at the Castle to constitute a stable image of the past. This classical perspective could be seen to be reinforced through the representation of the Castle as a treasured national monument and an icon of colonial history.

How Table Bay was pictured in the 17th century provides a useful avenue for the theoretical concerns of this project insofar as these images can be used to hold two discursive orders in tension. The imperial narrative of 1952 implies that there is a recoverable, true history which it constructs as a teleology. In this history, images of

[1] The William Fehr Collection owns three of the eight extant 17th century Dutch paintings of Table Bay in South Africa. These three are A. Smit's *The Dutch East India 'Africa' in Table Bay* (1683); a small painting wrongly attibuted to Jan Porcellis of *Dutch Whaling Ships in Table Bay* (previously but probably incorrectly dated 1615) and another (artist unknown) bearing an approximate catalogue date of 1715 of Dutch ships in Table Bay. The Brenthurst Library has an important painting by Willaerts of *c.*1636, the SACHM has one by R. Zooms of *c.* 1650-1660 & Museum Africa has two (artists unknown) dated in the 1660s. The Standard Bank owns a painting attributed to de Reynier (see Carman 1994).

Table Bay, for example, function as flashbacks. Part of the problem with this, as I have intimated in Chapter Two, is the inference that History is constructed in relation to a singular, unchanging point of view. This is complicated by evidence of the construction of an imperial prospect in landscape representations at the Cape in the 17th century.

My aim in this chapter is to reassess the supposedly stable tradition of 17th century representations of Table Bay and to prise them apart from how space is represented in the Tercentenary narrative. In particular I question the wedded-ness of landscape to imperial ways of seeing and the assumption that landscape is necessarily a unitary category in the first place.[2] These representations (from the late 15th century onwards[3]) encapsulate the changing concerns and desires of European travellers at the Cape. Beginning in the late 17th century, oil paintings of Table Bay were commissioned by the Dutch and English East India Companies for their offices (two of these are in the Collection at the Castle[4]): this view proclaimed imperial possession in a *coup d'oeuil*, meaning "a quick glance" or literally "stroke of the eye" (Collins English Dictionary 1979:343). It was the image most used to illustrate travellers' texts recounting their impressions of Table Bay in that it functioned as a frame to delineate the salient features of the territory. The first decades of settlement at the

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[2] Mitchell questions whether landscape is integrally connected with imperialism, citing the roll call of major "originating" movements in landscape painting (China, Japan, Rome, 17th century Holland, 19th century Britain). He suggests that "as a minimum we need to explore the possibility that the representation of landscape is not only a matter of internal politics and national or class ideology, but also an international, global phenomenon, intimately bound up with the discourses of imperialism" (Mitchell 1994:9). In this chapter, I am arguing that while landscape conventions could be seen to embody the imperial prospect, it does not follow that we only have access to a singular, detached point of view.

[3] The earliest geographies of Table Bay are the portolan charts (see Norwich 1983). The oldest extant picture of the Dutch settlement in Table Bay is an anonymous watercolour of *c.*1655/6 in the State Archives at The Hague (see Godee-Molsbergen 1913:25). This image seems to have served as the template for Van de Aa's image of 1707 (fig. 3): the viewer appears to hover in mid-air at a distance from the shore. It is conceivable that this image could have served as the source for Dapper (fig. 11), in that, among other comparable details, the bay is imaginatively portrayed as having a number of inlets which are exaggerated in Dapper's rendition.

[4] These are A. Smit's *Cape Town at 1686* (c. 1686) (possibly commissioned by William of Orange (Fehr 1973:13)) and Lambert & Scott's image of 1732 commissioned by the English East India Company for their offices in Leadenhall Street (Fehr 1973:97). Lambert & Scott's image is a copy of Smit's image which in turn was probably in part based on Dapper.

Cape after 1652 mark a dramatic shift in representations of Table Bay, most critically in relation to changing representations of the Khoikhoi.

In this chapter I suggest that the versatility of landscape as a vital category of colonial strategy is more complex than it appears at first because it is implicated in a number of invisible mechanisms and a vast network of cultural codes. Landscape as "a pictorial attitude to the land" (Mitchell 1994:26) was one of the most significant forms of travel discourse at the Cape during the 17th century. Landscape conventions at the Cape encapsulate the contradictory and ambiguous nature of the apparent stability of the imperial eye, inscribing different ways of codifying a colonially produced other in a variety of (apparently) fixed and stable positions and a variety of (seemingly) given sets of differences (see Pratt 1985:122).

The Tercentenary narrative, as I argue in Chapter Two, elides a sense of different and polyvalent orders of time and space. In Chapters One and Two I argue that a dominant strategy of this public narrative is to recruit and subsume images and artefacts in the Collection within a closed historical space. The authority of the Tercentenary narrative relies on the illusion of the imperial prospect in order to recruit images as freeze-frames in its sequential structure. This story neutralises plurality and difference by equating all other spatialities within its own construction of space as homogeneous. In the second chapter I recall how Enlightenment forms of knowledge reorganised the epistemological table in such a way that they consolidated the illusion of single-point perspective. This illusion presupposed the possibility of a universal vantage point outside language.

The identity and desires of European colonisers were not simply projected or inscribed on Table Bay, nor was Table Bay entirely drawn from the imagination. I argue that while classical representation did provide a grammar or framework for the picturing of Table Bay, these images are not simply an imperial projection. In Chapter Two I argue that one of the ways in which imperial narratives can be opened up or refigured is by moving away from a conception of space as an abstract and passive

arena on which things happen. It is this conception that makes it appear as if there is a seamlessness between two very different (and open-ended) processes: the way in which an official history was manufactured in 1952, and those diverse and multiple processes by which the Cape was inhabited, literally and metaphorically, from the late 15th century onwards.

By attention to the production of meaning in these images, I suggest that it is possible to discern -- in relation to the all-seeing imperial eye and its teleology of conquering nationalist heroes -- a multitude of identities and spatialities (real, metaphoric, displaced and elided) simultaneously present. I do this by opening up some of these representations to show their function in making different and often contradictory forms of knowledge visible.

17th and early 18th century images of Table Bay have generally been dismissed as fanciful and exotic. Wintein-Clarke (1994), for example, writing on a recent exhibition of images of Table Bay at the Koopmans-De-Wet House in Cape Town, advises the viewer to regard these images with caution. In 1910 Colvin set the tone in dismissing the majority of images of the Cape during this period as a "false dawn" dominated by the fanciful imaginings of pioneers like Peter Kolbe, whose bestselling *The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope* was published in Germany in 1719 (Colvin 1979:36). For Colvin, a more truthful representation begins with the arrival at the Cape of the Enlightenment scholars, Thunberg, Sparrman and Masson, disciples of Linnaeus, in the 1770s. Colvin's distinction between true and false imagery of Table Bay is not only spurious in that it ignores the mediacy of representation, more importantly it fails to take into account the social and metaphorical function of these imperial images.

The tradition of imagery of Table Bay expressed in the stereotypical *coup d'oeuil* invented a prospect based on a theatrical illusion of knowledge as pre-eminently territorial and on view. This invention was as much part of colonial strategy at the Cape as the invention of cartography. The projection and imposition of a European

grammar rooted in systems of classical representation enabled the travellers to reduce the immense and shocking diversities of the place to a rational and ultimately controllable structure.

In arriving at the Cape, the travellers did not find a ready-made landscape to be transcribed -- it had to be created. "Landscape remains alien, impenetrable, until a language is found to win it, speak it, represent it" (Coetzee 1988:7). Discoveries did not lie in anything that was necessarily there, but in what was thought to correspond with what had been anticipated and what could be anticipated, contained and shaped by language. Exploration is usually a projection of the known, a carrying-over of familiar relations to, and mental images of, one cultural space into another. When, over 500 years ago, travellers left Europe to travel south in search of a sea-route to India, they had already invented a southern land at the tip of Africa. Yet this unknown Africa was also a frontier or horizon of discovery. This discovery was not merely a form of geographical expansion. It was also a political, economic and technological process (accompanied by a host of religious, legal and moral justifications) directed at the future of a prospect outside of the boundaries of the mapped and enclosed European space of towns, fiefdoms and kingdoms.

Artists of the Cape up to the First British Occupation in 1795 were firstly in the main amateur and itinerant, and secondly, where they were professional artists, they had generally never visited the Cape.[5] Many accounts of travels to the East were published from the 16th century onwards which meant that visual data was usually processed by European engravers. Artists in Europe (and porcelain painters in China), for example, commissioned to depict the Cape either relied on verbal accounts

[5] A notable artist who did visit the Cape was William Hodges (R.A.) (1744-1797). Hodges, a landscape artist (and scene painter (Meltzer, 1994 in conversation)), visited the Cape as official artist on Capt. Cook's second voyage. He painted Table Bay at least twice towards the end of 1772. One of these paintings is in the Fehr Collection at the Castle; another (reproduced in Smith (1992:120)), is in the National Maritime Museum in London.
Bax (1957) claims that among the few works of the early settlement that rank highly as works of art are those by the Dane, Johannes Rach of 1762 (reprinted in Godee-Molsbergen 1913:50-52). These images are more concerned with scenes of everyday life at the Cape than with representing an imperial prospect.

(see figs. 4,5 & 6), on images available in geographies of the Cape (see figs. 7, 8 & 9) or more often than not on topographical drawings made by naval artists, civil servants, missionary artists and travellers in the employ of the East India Companies. Many images contain a key in which certain spatial configurations are highlighted. The wealth and variety of images of Table Bay is astounding, so much so that by 1780 certain views and images had become stereotypical (partly also because one image could serve as a source for a number of artists, who would simply adapt the image to their own needs (figs. 10, 11, 12 & 13)). The thousands of people in the employment of the East and West India Companies, the first multinational commercial enterprises, were the first tourists to the fringes of the known world: the emblem of Table Bay seems to have transformed all forms of objects (from glasses to porcelain to miniature paintings) into souvenirs for an enlarging market of travellers and armchair travellers. Ceramics and glassware in the William Fehr Collection bear this emblem of the Cape alongside the monogram of the VOC.

Pictorial records of the Cape from the 17th century onwards rely heavily on the descriptive sequence of the prospect in which the travellers' presence as agents in the country is secondary to a kind of collective moving eye which registers the changing face of the country in a self-effacing and noninterventionist way. In this kind of picturing (whether visually or in writing), the visible prospect is presented chiefly as a panorama -- in sweeping prospects that open before or, more often, beneath, the travellers' eye (Pratt 1985:124). The elision of the traveller as a presence in the landscape suggests, Pratt ventures, a fantasy of dominance: "The eye 'commands' what falls within its gaze; the mountains 'show themselves' or 'present themselves'; the country 'opens up' before the European newcomer, as does the unclothed indigenous bodyscape" (Pratt 1985:124). The task of this strategy, which centres landscape, separates people from place and effaces the speaking self, was, as Pratt explains to become the *raison d'etre* of Enlightenment science. Its aim was

> to incorporate a particular reality into a series of interlocking informational orders -- aesthetic, geographic, mineralogical, botanical, agricultural, economic, ecological, ethnographic, and so on. To the extent that it strives to efface itself, the invisible eye/I strives to make those informational orders natural, to find them there uncommanded, rather than assert them as the producers/products of European knowledges or disciplines (Pratt 1985:125).

Most of these images of Table Bay appear as prints, which in the association of this medium with possession and circulation, invite a distinction between those addressed as viewers of the landscape and those who can only be imagined as subjects in it: only the first group enjoys the linked privileges of possession and circulation represented by the travel narratives. These mobile picturesque viewers are contrasted with a notion of the subject of the landscape as fixed, circumscribed, and unable to grasp the larger entity which is the imperial project.

A discourse of the Cape was already well in circulation by 1652 when Dutch settlement was inaugurated. In this period, the mutual engagement between the concerns of a burgeoning science of natural history and European economic and political expansionism coded the Cape in terms of a rational, dissociative (temporal) order which overlaid spatial, experiential relations among people, plants and animals. One of the most interesting aspects of this can be seen in the emptying out of the Khoi from representations of the landscape in the late 17th century whence they emerge as ethnographic types. Early written accounts of encounters in Table Bay dwell in the most vivid detail on the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape, largely with horrified fascination. Images of the Cape at this stage generally include Khoikhoi figures; initially travellers' experiences of the indigenous inhabitants of the Cape were so overwhelming as to account for their prominence in the landscape (fig. 2). By the 1680s, however, another kind of view asserts dominance in which the Castle takes central place in a landscape that is unpeopled. The implied position of the viewer is either in the air (which supports Pratt's thesis) as in Van de Aa's image of 1707 (fig. 3) or, more generally, from a position on (an implied) ship in the bay. Even though territorial possession was not strictly part of imperial strategy at the Cape, emissaries from European states begin to declare their presence through spatial forms and fantasies emanating from an unknown site behind the speaking eye/I, behind the periphery of what is seen. Pratt equates this seat of power with the State, recalling a conception of the state as "a form of public power separate from both ruler and ruled,

constituted most basically by the exclusive right to exercise legitimate violence within a certain defined territory" (Pratt 1985:126).

Colonial landscapes embody what Mitchell calls "the dreamwork of imperialism" (Mitchell 1994:10) as it shuttles back and forth in space-time "to disclose both utopian fantasies of the perfected imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and unsuppressed resistance" (Mitchell 1994:10). Bunn argues that colonial landscapes are different from their European counterparts for a number of reasons and that a different order of representation manifests in the colonies.

In the first place, landscape conventions encounter a rival, indigenous semiotic: "colonial space is a site of regular ontological shock" (Bunn 1994:129). The zone encapsulated by the view is often that of a frontier in which the relationship between landscape and vision is complicated by the association of sight with surveillance. How does the colonial landscape, conceived as a text or semiotic system, naturalise the presence of a nonindigenous figure in an exotic landscape at the same time as normalising the landscape through the invention of a point of view? The colonial landscape, Bunn suggests, occupies a liminal status: while rendering the colony visible as a necessary prerequistite for administrative control, it must also mediate between selfhood and savagery. At the same time, Bunn argues, "colonial landscapes must settle two orders in responding to local contests over symbolic power on the imperial periphery", while acknowledging "metropolitan changes in the relations of production and self-fashioning" (Bunn 1994:128). These questions are particularly interesting at the Cape since changing perceptions of the Cape differ quite dramatically from colonial representations in 17th century America and later in the South Pacific.[6] Later in this chapter I compare 17th century representations of Table Bay with an example of mid-17th century Dutch landscape imagery of Brazil.

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[6] Colonisation of Australia and New Zealand only really got underway by the end of the 18th century. For a discussion of landscape images of the South Pacific see Smith, *European Vision in the South Pacific* (1984) (see p. 69 for a discussion of how Tahiti became identified with classical landscape and New Zealand with romantic landscape). See also Mitchell (1994) and Smith (1992).

When European merchants began pushing back the outer rim of the directly-known world in the second half of the 15th century, they had already produced a number of inventions of southern Africa. For medieval Europeans the entire world had been inhabited after the flood by the sons of Noah: Japhet (for Europe), Sem or Chem (for Asia) and Cham or Ham (for Africa). Pliny in his *Historia Naturalis* imagined Africa to be inhabited by monstrous races including such people as Trogodytae (cave dwellers), Blemmyae (people with mouth and eyes on chest) and Garamantes (sexually promiscuous). The popular, fictitious and well-illustrated Mandeville's *Travels* (1346) and *Livre des Merveilles du Monde* by Harent of Antioch in the 15th century elaborated on these descriptions, solidifying a language used by travellers to describe those they encountered on their voyages of reconnaissance to different parts of the world. Early European travellers were allegedly so afraid of sea monsters, serpent rocks and water unicorns in the Green Sea of Darkness (called the Ethiopian Sea, later termed the Atlantic), and of sailing off the edge of the world, that the Portuguese Prince Henry had to obtain a dispensation from the Pope to protect the souls of sailors before they would agree to venture south on caravels bearing the cross upon their sails (Colvin 1912:5).

Another belief dated back to Aristotle's *Meteorologica*, in which it was held that beyond the Sahara and the equator, but complementary to the Mediterranean world, existed another temperate and habitable region which for some constituted a southern terrestrial paradise. This tradition stems from Dante in the 13th century, who described this paradise as one reached after a long and terrifying journey through hell. Dante described this paradise as being located on the the flat summit of the island of Purgatory which rose steeply out of the ocean in the far south. The Cantino nautical chart (1502) (fig. 14) -- an important reference for the first printed maps of Africa, emphasises a flat-topped mountain at the southernmost end of the continent. The identification of the top of Table Mountain with paradise was reiterated in the writings of Aluigi de Giovanni (1543) and in 1588 by Livio Sanuto (Penn 1992:6).

Table Bay was rarely a destination in itself. The significance of the place lay in its position in the path of the trade winds and ocean currents, and its location as a natural harbour halfway between Europe and the lucrative markets of the East. Table Bay was important as a gateway to another more significant place: it guarded a passage and it was to its place within this passage that the name The Cape of Good Hope referred. As all students of South African history are taught, the Cape of Good Hope became an identifiable place in 1488 as a name supposedly given by King John II of Portugal, following the first (then known[7]) rounding of the tip of Africa by Dias and his crew in January of that year. From even before it is seen, or known to have been rounded, it is anticipated by King John, for whom, in Barros's account "it seemed as if his ships followed the coast which they were now discovering [west of Africa] they could not fail to reach the Prasum Promontorium at the end of that land. . . . and by such means find a route to India" (Barros *cit.* Raven-Hart 1967:1). Even although Dias and his crew first touch the southern coast of Africa at *Bahia dos Vaqueros* (now known as Mossel Bay), this bay is not accorded the historical significance of the Cape. Barros's first mention of the Cape in the context of Dias's journey is the travellers' awareness of having passed it "[for] the coast [now] ran generally towards the east whence it would appear they had passed some great cape which it would be better to turn back and discover" (Barros *cit.* Colvin 1912:7). On their return journey, Barros recounts that "they came in sight of that great and famous cape concealed for so many centuries, which when it was seen made known not only itself but also another new world of countries" (Barros *cit.* Colvin 1912:8). They called it the Stormy Cape "because of the perils and storms they had endured in doubling it" and on their return to Portugal it was given its present name because it gave promise of the discovery of India. Thus this name does not apply to the place itself, to the certainty of a fixed location, but embodies the notion of deferral, of a place somewhere else, a place in the future.

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[7] There is apparently a map in the Laurentian library in Florence, dated 1351, which shows the complete outline of Africa (Cape Times 14 November 1919). It is surmised that Marco Polo brought this information back with him from China. Norwich (1983:15) notes the landmark discovery for cartographers of Africa of the maps used by Chinese voyagers and traders, the existence of which was brought to cartographers' notice by Professor Keui-sheng Chang in 1969. The oldest of these

The Portuguese first described the route to India with the publication of *Da Asia* by Joao de Barros in 1552.[8] To safeguard the Portuguese monopoly of the ocean route round the Cape, export of Portuguese charts abroad had been punishable by death since 1501. Barros recounts that what came to be known as Table Bay was first named Aguada de Saldhana by Antonio de Saldhana who visited the bay in 1503 (not knowing where he was, he climbed the mountain thus ascertaining that this was indeed the famous Cape! (Barros 1552 *cit.* Raven-Hart 1967:8)).[9] The Portuguese tended to give the Cape a wide berth following the death of the Viceroy D' Almeida and tens of his men at the hands of the Khoi in 1509, a circumstance triggered by the Portuguese capture of some Khoi children whom they had held as ransom for cattle. This event was well-known to later travellers who unjustly surmised that the Khoi were irrationally warlike.

In spite of the secrecy surrounding the route, smuggled charts informed the compilation of two great world maps, one in 1507 and another in 1516, known as the Waldseemuller maps (see Norwich 1983:26-7). These maps had immense influence on all subsequent map-makers in terms of the depiction of Africa and in particular on the Dutch school, of whom Ortelius, Mercator and Plancius are the principal representatives of the 16th century. Information on these maps was drawn from numerous apocryphal sources, including a number of Ptolemaic traditions from the second century AD such as the (mythical) source of the Nile in the Mountains of the

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maps was compiled in 1320 by Chu-ss-pen, the most celebrated Chinese cartographer of the Mongol dynasty.

[8] Barros did not journey with Dias and da Gama whose journeys he described. "From 1525 to 1528, Barros served as treasurer of the House of Guine e Indias which supervised commercial operations to Africa and India. In 1533 he was appointed factor of the House, where he had access to documents and charts, and he started preparing a chronicle of Portuguese contacts with Africa and India" (Axelson 1988:1). Axelson notes that certain of Barros's facts are inaccurate. Unfortunately, Barros's geography has not survived (Axelson (note 23):3).

[9] This name continued to be used by the English and to appear on their maps long after the name Table Bay, given by Von Spilbergen in 1601, had become the more common reference. The secrecy surrounding the route allied with the battle for sovereignty, resulted in conflicting traditions of naming at the Cape. The English relied on the Portuguese maps long after the Dutch consolidated a cartography of the Cape.

Moon, and the suggestion that the African interior teemed with vast cities.[10] Such information, faithfully recorded by Jan Huygen van Linschoten who travelled the route in 1582-3 (although he never actually stopped at the Cape), fuelled the expectations of the Dutch regarding the Cape's hinterland (fig. 15). Dutch explorers in Van Riebeeck's time at the Cape, using Linschoten's map as a guide, fully expected at the summit of every rise to look down upon the cities and mythic polities with which that map is crammed (Malherbe 1990:45). Like the mythical kingdom of Prester John, the fabled empire of Monomotapa entered the imagination of Europe as a source of instant wealth which the Europeans were determined to possess.

The earliest depictions of the Cape and Table Mountain can be found on these maps and navigation charts. A good example is Joris van Spilbergen's map of 1601 in which the mountains are shown as an emblematic motif (fig. 16). This form of abbreviated icon was imaginatively incorporated into paintings such as Willaerts's *Man-o'-war Amsterdam and other ships in Table Bay* of circa 1636 in the Brenthurst Collection (fig. 17) in which the depiction of Table Mountain is apparently closely related to a silhouette of the Cape coastline in a sea atlas published by the firm Van Keulen in use from the 17th to the 19th centuries (Cole 1993:7). In this work, the mountain serves the secondary function of anchoring the image to a geographical location, possibly to highlight the vast extent of Dutch whaling activities. A similar work, although less ambitious in scale, on the same theme in the Fehr Collection (fig. 18) shows an ambiguous rocky outcrop which could easily be dismissed were it not for two prints in which the location of such a formation is specified -- Meister's representation of 'Teuffels Berg' (1692) and another depicting the marking of D'Almeida's grave on the shores of Table Bay (Cole 1993:7).

[10] The news of cities in the far south of Africa were largely based on (Arabic and) Portuguese accounts of trading activities on the east coast of Africa . Within the empire of Monomatopa, a great city like Great Zimbabwe (and later Khami in the 17th & 18th centuries), for example, flourished in present-day Zimbabwe during the 1400 and 1500's, but such cities were not as far south or as numerous as the travellers imagined. Mapungubwe (near Mafikeng) was probably the most southern city, but it seems to have been in decline by the 11th century.

That artists and mapmakers swopped imagery to the extent that they did, testifies to shared role these images performed. Such misty delineations of Table Bay would probably have been known in 17th century Holland by the term *landschap* which was used as early as the 16th century by cartographers such as Frisius and Ortelius to refer -- like the *chorographia* in Ptolemy's distinction -- to "a province, a district, or more generally any extensive area of land", representations of which were often included at the margins of maps (Harley & Zandvliet 1992:11). These marginal emblems, Harley and Zandvliet argue, should not be read as formulaic landscapes of some emerging cartographic science "but as a redescription of countryside scrutinized and controlled to produce an image. . . . concerned with the subordination of space" (Harley & Zandvliet 1992:16). The importance of these pictures at the margins of maps is that they offer "a system of possibility for knowledge, but not the supposed knowledge of scientific truth" (Harley & Zandvliet 1992:15). Such images transform spaces into places as metaphorical articulations of a position in which colonisation *could* occur.

The Cape embodied many systems of possibility for Europe. Thus far I have contextualised some of the ways in which imaginary, ambivalent and often contradictory views of the Cape were consolidated before and around the time that the Cape was claimed by the Dutch in 1652. It begins to emerge that, despite the fantastical and/or borrowed nature of many of these descriptions, they represented a body of knowledge that invented the Cape as a landscape in a multiplicity of intertexts in which Europeans could move and orientate themselves. For travellers and others for whom this knowledge functioned as valuable information, the retrospective truth-value of these representations is irrelevant. In scanning prospects in the spatial sense -- as a cartographic entities or abbreviated landscape panoramas, the travellers imagined possibilities for the landscape in the temporal and imperial sense (Pratt 1985:125). This process began in earnest with the establishment of the East India Companies.

For the Dutch, long term control of the European world economy necessitated the capture of its long-distance trade, and therefore of American and Asian products.[11] Asia proved more profitable -- it was here in the realm of pepper, fine spices, drugs, pearls, silk and porcelain that the Dutch consolidated their economic leadership. For knowledge of these routes they relied on the reconnaissance voyages undertaken by Van Linschoten (1582/3) and Cornelius Houtman in 1592. Braudel asserts that it is quite clear that the Dutch merchants at first intended these expeditions as purely commercial, hoping to avoid skirmishes with rival European powers. A few run-ins with the Portuguese encouraged the Dutch to consider "a single policy, a single direction and a single control of Asian affairs" -- culminating in the creation in 1602 of a chartered East India Company and followed in 1621 by the formation of the Dutch West India Company. The *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC) was "to conduct itself like an independent power, a state within a state" (Braudel 1984:213). The foundation of Batavia in 1619 as their administrative centre in the East Indies consolidated a position from which the Dutch could oversee the immense web of traffic and exchange which would eventually make up their empire. This was echoed in the Americas with the establishment of three important colonial towns by mid-century (see Hall 1991:41-57).[12] The Cape of Good Hope was settled in 1652 [13] as a way-station for the re-provisioning of Dutch fleets to and from the East Indies.[14]

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[11] Amsterdam's position at the forefront of the European city-centred economy in the 17th century happened unexpectedly. The establishment of most types of industry combined with skills in carpentry that included the design (in 1570) of a sensational merchant vessel known as the *vlieboot* or *fluyt*, the biggest shipyard in the world and a fleet the equivalent of all other fleets put together accelerated the extraordinary rise and unexpected power of this little and almost brand-new country (Braudel 1984: 177-193). Despite alternating power struggles between the princes of the House of Orange who 'governed' as *Stadtholders* and the divergent interests of the United Provinces, for most of the 17th century such matters were subordinate to the business of trade.

[12] These were on Manhattan island (New Amsterdam, from 1624), on the Caribbean island of Curacao (Willemstad, from 1634) and in Brazil (Recife/Mauritsstad, from 1630) (Hall 1991:41-57).

[13] In 1620, two English fleet commanders, Schilling and Fitzherbert, had annexed the Cape in the name of King James. This event aroused no enthusiasm in England at the time -- nevertheless it attested to an interest in permanent British settlement at the Cape long before the VOC took possession of it in 1652 (Raven-Hart 1967:107).

[14] The Dutch trading empire was to reach its zenith by mid-century; by the end of the 17th century, competition and large-scale internal corruption began to signal its decline.

The Dutch initially did not have ambitions at the Cape beyond its value as a way-station. Mauritsstad, for example, completed as the capital of New Holland in 1642, was the focus of a far grander architectural programme (see Hall 1991). Nevertheless, the design of Cape Town corresponded with what Hall has termed the relationship between Dutch economic hegemony and the beginnings of a global material culture (see Chapter Two:26, & Hall 1991:43).

The first preoccupation of the administrators of the VOC was to create a space defined by European principles which enabled them to reduce the diversity of the terrain to a rational and ultimately controllable structure. Parallel to the imposition of geometric urban design, maps and pictures were essential to the East India Company's definition of its territories as political and territorial entities. To this end, they promoted the ideal of systematic mapping in order to reinforce and legitimate the conceptual image of their empire. "The imperial strategy of first claiming an empire on paper ... helped to create a psychological climate for future colonisation" (Harley 1990:36). The Dutch contribution to the development of modern mapping was seminal. New field techniques such as the explication of triangulation[15] by Frisius revolutionised surveying. The atlas as we know it today, derived from Ptolemy's *Geographia*, but with standardization and uniformity as keynotes, was invented by Ortelius. Ortelius, Mercator and the new school of Dutch geographers also emancipated cartography from archaic conventions. Cartography had become a certain, rational and accessible knowledge (Harley & Zandvliet 1992:11).

As I have indicated already, the role of landscape was intimately bound up with this process. Not only the word *landschap*, but also the word portrait was used in connection with maps. Contemporary usage meant that maps were created through the *art* of drawing. Mapmakers and painters were found in the same guilds. This

[15] Triangulation came to be regarded as the only solid base for scientific geography by the mid 18th century. "The primary triangles spread over the country establish almost beyond error a multituds of points, and the spaces comprehended within these, when filled up by the details of subordinate surveyors ... afford to the world a map without a parallel, whether in relation to its accuracy, to its extensiveness or the unity of the effort by which it will have been achieved" (Lord Hastings, Governor General of India 1817 *cit.* Edney 1992:61).

conceptual blurring between measuring, recording and picturing gave maps and images equal weight as descriptions. Mapmakers took pains to explain how useful their descriptions were for a better understanding of history, religion and so forth, and how valuable they were in the administration of taxes and boundaries (Harley & Zandvliet 1992:11). The corollary of this argument is the need to reinstate picturing as a language which helped to constitute social practices and relations.

The symbolic importance of Dutch colonial architecture was, suggests Hall, less "reason flowing gently from a classical education", than "an order of desperation . . . Colonial hierarchies needed to counteract the chaotic, organic growth of urban centres and the disorder of those whose lands were being colonised" (Hall 1991:48). This reintroduces the issue of space. The politics of spatial management tends towards the establishment of spatial positions, areas and networks in an attempt to articulate the economic, demographic and behavioural structures of spaces. But this is not a simple case of an imposition of colonial order.

Stallybrass and White have shown how in discourse, the statements of classes in dialectic opposition are incorporated into both sides of the dialogue: "the result is a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire in the construction of subjectivity: a psychological dependence upon precisely those Others which are being rigorously opposed and excluded at the social level" (Stallybrass & White 1986:5 *cit.* Hall 1992:391-392). How are these ideas of mobility and conflict coded in 17th century pictures of Table Bay?

The most basic cultural interpretation of landscape is that it is not wilderness. Nature, Sauer (1926) has argued, consists of the qualities of the site or terrain, which are beyond human power to add to them, though we may develop them, ignore them in part, or subtract from them. These developments add up to the landscape's cultural expression which put into play the formal or thematic interplay of art and nature.

Humanising of landscape often occurs in images through the metaphor of the garden, a tradition which would have seemed likely at the Cape given that its status as a garden was its founding *raison d'être*. Despite its original associations with a terrestrial paradise, the establishment of a colony at the Cape did not encourage artists to depict the Cape as an idyll. This contrasts with certain 17th century Dutch images of Brazil.

Painters who accompanied Governor-General Maurits van Nassau-Siegen to New Holland in 1636 included Frans Post and Albert Eckhout. While Eckhout is remembered for his realist ethnographic canvases, Post concentrated on the overpowering quality of the landscape and has become known as the Canaletto of Brazil (Hall 1991:68). Post's work relates to the topographical tradition within Dutch painting that emerges in the drawings of Hendrick Goltzius at the beginning of the 17th century and reaches fulfilment in the work of Hercules Seghers and Philips Koninck (Smith 1992:18). Smith describes Post's images as ambiguous. On the one hand, Post tries to subsume his Brazilian material within a sensibility appropriate to European landscape conventions by evoking universalising idealist modes, drawn primarily from literary precedent. Concerned more with the arcadian prospects of the Portuguese plantations than with the achievement of Mauritsstad, Post presents an image of domestic tranquility in the jungle (fig.19). On the other he draws attention to the strange and rather threatening novelties of Brazil by "juxtaposing them as foreground repoussoir elements in a jumble of images representing the plants, animals, negro labourers and Tapuya Indians of the Dutch colony" (Smith 1992:20). Smith claims that while things themselves are drawn with realism and clarity, their relationships are arbitrary. These relationships appear less arbitrary, I would argue, when one considers their role in relation to that of similar imagery on maps. Such groups articulate a spatial and social context: they define and describe the place in the same way as a vista or topography is definitive, while at the same time declaring the exotic nature of the place as other within the colonial framework. Otherness is integral to colonial endeavour: the (colonially defined) other mediates, bounds and inspires the colonists' civilising mission.

Images of Table Bay, although they often contain classicizing elements (fig. 20), do not seem to have inspired artists, as in Brazil, to depict an oasis of tranquility within a thicket of exotica. However, a similarly constructed tradition of exotic landscape is well-represented at the Cape in the 17th century.

To early European travellers, no person or creature could be imagined as more exotic or alien than the Khoikhoi. Tension is established in travellers' narratives between the beauty and suitability of the bay for colonial endeavour and the loathsomeness of the Khoi, an attitude tempered by the observation that the Khoi were, however, not above civilising. Part of the travellers' and settlers' difficulty with the Khoi was that they defied the Europeans' sense of order:

> In the early records, one finds a repetoire of remarkable facts about the Hottentots repeated again and again: their implosives (turkey-gobbling), their eating of unwashed intestines, their use of animal fat to smear their bodies, their habit of wrapping dried entrails around their necks, peculiarities of the pudenda of their women, their inability to conceive of God, their incorrigible indolence (Coetzee 1988:13).

Their personal habits as described by amazed travellers, led to the word Hottentot being adopted in the English language to describe the lowest level of humanity.

As Hall points out, the travellers' fixation with the Khoi fondness for eating raw guts "betray the semiotic connection between early modern Europe and Africa" (Hall 1991:66), a semiotic around which many 17th century representations of the Khoi turn. Quoting from Bakhtin, Hall cites Rabelais' 16th century text in which the symbolism of the viscera is illustrated. This text, Hall claims, was immensely popular in the Netherlands where it was published in 1682:

> Tripe, stomach, intestines are the bowels, the belly, the very life of man. But at the same time they represent the swallowing, devouring belly. Grotesque realism played with this double image, we might say with the top and bottom of the world. . . . The bowels are related to defecation and excrement. Further, the belly does not only eat and swallow, it is also eaten, as tripe. . . . Further, tripe is linked with death, with slaughter, murder, since to disembowel is to kill. Finally it is linked with birth, for the belly generates. Thus in the image of tripe, life and death, birth, excrement and food are all drawn together and tied in one grotesque knot; this is the centre of bodily topography in which the upper and lower stratum penetrate one another (Bakhtin 1981 *cit.* Hall 1991:66).

In associating the Khoi primarily with the symbolism of entrails, the travellers are able to encapsulate their sense of ontological shock, while preserving a sense of offering factual information about the Khoi from a position neither explicitly anchored in an observing self or in a particular encounter in which contact occurs. At the same time the Europeans introduce a binary operation in which their role is superior.

Lodewijcksz's account of Houtman's expedition of 1595, one of the earliest extant published images of the Khoikhoi, depicts two highly stylised Khoi men (in an unspecific location), in poses ironically reminiscent of arcadian shepherds, one of whom displays the offending guts (fig. 21). This image served as a template for a number of depictions over the next century[16]. The English traveller, Herbert's, published account of his expedition in 1627, contains a similarly posed image of a Khoi couple in which the topography of Table Bay forms a background to a caricature of alleged Khoi savagery. The woman, shown suckling a child from her breast slung over her right shoulder, displays dripping entrails (fig. 2). Herbert and his party's presence in the landscape is indicated by two features: the travellers' tents and the name 'Herbert's Mount'.

This tradition of imagery is ambiguously imperial. Ideological articulations of conquest and territorial appropriation, in this case presented as a portrait of manners and customs, are subjectified in the traces of the presence of the travellers themselves. The portrait of manners and customs is a normalizing discourse, whose work is to codify difference and pin the other in a timeless present of fixed actions and reactions. 'The Hottentot' is generalised as a *sui generis* configuration, often only a list of features set in a temporal order different from that of the speaking and perceiving subject (Pratt 1985:121). However, as is evident here, manners and customs

[16] The Lodewijckz image is virtually replicated by Iversen (1670), and Von Mandelslo (1658) combines both Lodewijckz and Linschoten's images in his illustration. A new version appears in Tachard's work (1686) using Claudius's drawings (Smith 1993:13). Wilhelm Stettler, in Herport (1669) (fig. 20) depicts a Khoi group in a classical ensemble; though the poses and drapery have been classicised, the figures are shown eating entrails. This fanciful group, observed by an (invented) armour-plated rhinecerous and an agitated ostrich, contrast with an extremely well-observed rendition of the topography of Table Mountain.

description is always in play with other sorts of representation that bespeak difference and position subjects in their own ways. In positioning himself within the frame, Herbert subverts the ideological project of normalizing description by explicitly anchoring his narrative in an observing self.

Smith suggests that after 1652 two distinct perceptions of the Khoikhoi become evident which he terms a public and an official version. The former category refers to the already existing tradition, termed public since these accounts were published for literate Europeans interested in travel and geography. The official descriptions refer to those noted in the journal kept for the VOC in which stereotypical generalisations give way to an apparently more objective attitude. The increasing use of the names of Khoi groups, such as Cochoqua, Goringhaiqua, etc, instead of just 'Hottentot', as well as the names of Khoi individuals determine a different kind of narrative from that which had dominated Khoi descriptions for over a century. This official description entered published literature through Dapper's highly influential *Naukerige Beschrijvinge der Afrikaensche Gewesten* . . . (Amsterdam 1668) which was in its many versions and translations to become the most quoted source for descriptions of the Cape. Dapper never set foot in South Africa. A compiler of data from all over the world, he was lucky enough to obtain a manuscript from someone familiar with the Cape and its inhabitants (Smith & Pheiffer1993:13). Dapper's work, however, though it may have been partially based in the experience of someone living at the Cape, can be seen as a representative example of the manners-and-customs genre. It differs from the more traditional public narrative in that it is not rooted in the traveller's discourse of the journey. Long before Linnaeas classified humans in 1759, Dapper's encyclopaedia presented animals, topographies, Khoi 'physiognomy' and 'pastimes' "for the Universe Display'd" (see fig. 22).

The one sidedness of these definitions of the Khoi is offset by a number of roughly contemporaneous images with concord between Dutch and Khoi as their theme. In particular I am referring to the ink drawings recently discovered in the South African Library which appear to have been made at around the turn of the 18th century (see

Smith & Pheiffer 1993). They were never published, although Smith suggests that they could have been intended for publication in some kind of official report in that reference is made to a manuscript by a VOC merchant and official, Salomon Diodate. These vignettes, apparently from an artist's notebook, have obviously been drawn from life by a skilled artist (fig. 23). They contain a detailed, complex and vivid portrait of individuals and life at the Cape that contradicts the caricature of the savage stereotype. Unusually, interaction between the colonists and the Khoi is shown; some of the Khoi wear European dress.

A sense of concord between the two groups is expressed in Wouter Schouten's image of 1658. There are two variations of this image: a small watercolour in the Fehr collection (fig.24) was either cropped or enlarged to form the engraved illustration in the publication of Schouten's voyage. Against a wild and menacing portrayal of the mountain (echoed associatively by the shape of the lion in the hill), a relaxed group of colonists and Khoi mingle on the beach. A Dutch and a Khoi man are shown shaking hands although the latter seems to be turning away (fig. 28).

Another unusual set of images along these lines accompany Bogaert's account of his time at the Cape in 1702. Bogaert, an upper-surgeon with the VOC, attempts to assume an objective stance. He does not dismiss the Khoi by referring to a generic 'Hottentot' and differentiates between different Khoi groups. Two images accompany this text (figs. 25 & 26). In one in which the town and the bay are shown at a distance, Bogaert shows a Khoi encampment in which people are engaged in various pursuits like elephant-hunting, herding, milking and dancing. In an image of Vergelegen, the country residence of Governor Willem Adriaan van der Stel, a few Khoi figures (in traditional garb) wander within the space of the geometrically ordered farmstead while lions prowl outside.[17]

[17] These images are intriguing in that they appear to have been made for a very specific audience. Godee-Molsbergen (1913) argues that this image of Vergelegen was the one Willem-Adrian van de Stel sent to the Directors in Holland to protest against the charges made by the burghers that van de Stel made huge profits from illicit trade. Bogaert's image shows Vergelegen as far less imposing than the drawing of Vergelegen submitted by the burghers (Godee-Molsbergen 1913:37).

Bogaert's images contain a double meaning. Although he is concerned to humanise the Khoi, these images are overtly concerned with according them a place within the European schema. In fig. 25, the Khoi are placed on the opposite shore from the town; in fig. 26 they are included, but as subordinates within an ordered world represented by the symmetrical geometry of the farm. We saw how earlier landscapes of Table Bay were dominated by the presence of an alien semiotic symbolised by 'the Hottentot'; within decades this semiotic had been replaced with a different order, one of rational inclusion. Or had it?

The virtual disintegration of Khoisan society in Table Bay in the decades following European settlement stands in marked contrast to the resilience of a pastoral mode that first appeared in the south-western Cape between 2000 and 1600 years ago (Yates *et al* 1993:59). Inter-group feuds, wars against the colonists in 1659 and 1673, treaties in 1672 ceding the south-western Cape to the Dutch and finally the devastating smallpox epidemic of 1713 succeeded in reducing the Khoi in Table Bay to the status of menials and dependents (Smith 1993:10). Smith asserts that already by the 1680s the Khoi had lost all initiative to maintain their status as equals in this area: they began to adopt in various degrees various trappings of European culture, westernised clothing, the Dutch language (soon to develop into Afrikaans) and the ideological acceptance of their status as inferior in a society dominated and controlled by whites (Smith 1993:11).

Initially at the Cape the ontological shock of travellers' encounters came to be embodied in an invented image of 'the Hottentot'. This image functioned metaphorically and metonymically in landscape representations of Table Bay. The Khoi acted (literally and figuratively) as mediators in the travellers' and colonists' pursuit of cattle and knowledge of the interior, for example, thereby assisting the colonists to make their way. But, like Krotoa shedding her European clothing, they could just as easily disappear into an order which was not accessible to the

Europeans.[18] While it countered this alien semiotic with the systematics of a European knowledge-building project, this was predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as on anxiety and defence. "While its mastery is always asserted, it is always slipping, ceaselessly displaced, never complete" (Young 1990:143). Even as Khoi society is in rapid and serious decline, images like those accompanying Bogaert's text delineate the position of the Khoi at the boundaries of the colony whence they are necessary to affirm the presence of the colony in the first place.

In about the 1680s, another type of landscape came into its own at the Cape. Although the topographical image is much older, it now begins to carry a decidedly imperial air. It is an important image for it set the tone for imperial images of Table Bay for a long time to come.[19] I am referring to the large oil painting in the Fehr collection by Aernout Smit (1641-1710), which seems to have been painted some time possibly in the 1680s from a variety of visual sources, including Dapper (fig. 27). Although we do not know the circumstances in which it was produced, Fehr surmised that it was commissioned for William of Orange (Fehr 1973:13). The vessel *Africa* flies flags of the House of Orange.

This image unequivocally celebrates the dominance of the colonial presence. The Dutch flag appears at least fifteen times; every ship in the harbour is a Dutch ship affirming Dutch supremacy of the route to the East and the value of the port in this regard. Cole points out that what looks like a small puff of cloud on top of Lion's Head is in fact smoke from cannon shot fired to signal to the Castle that a ship is

[18] Krotoa, known to the settlers as Eva, is described by Van Riebeeck in his journal. She lived at the fort where she performed various duties as servant to Maria van Riebeeck and as an important mediator between the Dutch and the Khoi on whom the early settlement depended for livestock. She spoke fluent Dutch and at the fort appeared to all intents and purposes to have adopted a European way of life. She married a VOC official, the Danish surgeon Pieter van Meerhoff. They had three children. After his death she shocked colonists by her drunk and disorderly behaviour. She was given a Christian burial in the church of the new Castle.
It was particularly strange to Van Riebeeck, how, on expeditions away from the fort, she would abandon her acquired manners and dress and assume her former habits (see Malherbe (1990)).

[19] It undoubtedly served as a model for a painting also in the Fehr Collection by Samuel Scott and George Lambert in 1732.

approaching.[20] It could be inferred that this ship is the ship on which the viewer now enters the bay, thereby continually drawing us into this scene from the imperial pageant, while at the same time serving to remind us of the possible presence of an enemy from the sea. Fehr asserts the representation of the town to be accurate *circa* 1683 from the detailed representation of the Castle (the sea gate which was closed in 1684 and the flag flying from Katzenellenbogen bastion). The image anticipates the 18th century genre of marine painting which fulfilled the role of imperial narrative in the depiction of important naval events -- sea battles, arrivals at important ports of call, departures, marine festivals or merely portraits of particular ships (Cole 1993:14).

At the same time as it consolidates an image of imperial stability and temporal order, the creation of this Cape, an invention in the eye of the European mind, does not represent the Cape, but signifies the West's own dislocation from itself, something *inside* that is being narrativised as *outside*. Its presence is articulated around the concept of the boundary as marking a place of closure.

The traditional idea of the boundary is intimately connected to the production of unitary spaces aimed at totalizing heterogeneous functions and bringing its object into view under the operation of a common purpose. The function of the boundary is to produce a kind of closure that acts to preserve and separate the ideological identity of a given category.

From the beginning of Dutch settlement at the Cape there is a concern to make its boundaries physical (and in particularly to keep the Khoikhoi out). Van Riebeeck's hedge and plans by the VOC Commissioner Van Goens to turn the peninsula into an island by building a canal on the Flats are expressions of this.[21] Similar desires were codified as laws -- European men could not bring their non-European wives back to

[20] Many early pictures of Cape Town show flags flying from the top of Lion's Head and Signal Hill. This practice was integral to military strategy at the Cape. Bogaert in 1711 writes that it was institutued by Governor Goske in 1673 as a secret signalling system used in conjunction with the firing of cannon to indicate the number of ships entering the bay (Bogaert *cit.* Raven-Hart:1970).
[21] See Van Riebeeck's diaries, vol 2, p. 109 &126.

Europe (Guelke 1989:41). Although there does not seem to have been a law directed specifically at intercourse between Whites and Khoikhoi, in 1678, a pro forma proclamation outlawed *all* types of concubinage (Elphick 1985:205).[22] The difficulty, of course, of territorial boundaries at the Cape was that the whites did not possess the Khoikhois' country any more than they spoke their language -- they possessed a country of which the Khoi were unaware (see Carter 1987:64). Treaties and the exchanges of trinkets and so on that the whites took to mean that land had been ceded to them signified differently to the Khoi for whom the ownership of land was an alien concept.

One would imagine that the mountain would have provided a natural boundary -- at the Cape, however, that association too was subverted. Soldiers and slaves who deserted from the Castle were most likely to hide on the mountain. Table Mountain, Ross has written, was "as it were, a liberated, unconquered zone, not within the city, but above it, beckoning or threatening the city dwellers" (Ross 1985:112 *cit.* Dooling 1994:22). The mountain as threatening rather than enclosing is apparent in Schouten's engraving of the town in 1658 (fig. 28). Literally threatened from all sides, the Castle functioned as a *symbol* of the Company's ability to stamp their presence on the landscape (Hall *et al* 1990:35, emphasis in the original). Its significance in the European landscape was as an icon of the authority of the urban, rational order of European law-makers. But even here at the Castle, as Carter has written, "the boundary represents an act of spatial translation which did not exclude but set up a dialogue with the outside environment it created" (Carter 1987:168). The Castle housed a diverse group of people, ranging from the highest company officials to those lowest in the colonial order -- "nowhere else did slaves, soldiers, Company officials, sailors, free blacks and possibly Khoi live in such proximity as in the Castle. . . . [which] occupies a special place in the history of Cape Town as a place where the seeds of a variety of social relationships were sown " (Dooling 1994:26).

[22] On his expedition to Namaqualand in 1685, Simon van der Stel forbade his men to sleep with Khoikhoi women on pain of flogging and dismissal from the Company's service; this was not, however, a general law (Elphick 1985:205).

Carter defines the boundary not as an act of closure:

> From the point of view of spatial history, the notion of a one-sided, unified line of defence has little value. For . . . the essential function of the boundary is to facilitate communication. It enables places to appear and be named. It enables the settler to establish who and where he is. . . . But this difference does not imply an exclusive opposition. You grasp the settler and the place that declares his presence by seeing them in relation to the surrounding bush. The settler himself takes advantage of this distinction to make his own position clear (Carter 1987:159).

The boundary is a site of what Bhabha has termed "productive ambivalence" as a site of both fixity and fantasy (Bhabha 1994:67): "it provides a colonial 'identity' that is played out . . . in the face and space of the disruption and threat from the heterogeneity of other positions (Bhabha 1983:204 *cit.* Young 1990:145).

It is in this context that the stereotype derives its meaning as a major discursive strategy of colonialism. As a form of knowledge, Bhabha writes, it "vacillates between what is already 'in place', already known and something that must be anxiously repeated . . . as if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual licence of the African that needs no proof, can never really, in discourse, be proved" (Bhabha 1994:66).

The mapping of the Cape of Good Hope in pictorial and cartographic imagery and the practices of urban and town planning, defined, legitimized and enabled Dutch (and later British) rule through invention of two related images of empire. The first is the cartographic image of the country as a single territorial and political entity, that is, imperial space. (I argue that pictures and maps of Table Bay were part of the same representational system in 17th century Dutch descriptions.) Reliant on a naturalised concept of space as homogeneous and universal, cartography maintained the fantasy of being able to incorporate everything into a pre-existing world order structured around the myth of the innocent eye. The second is a conceptual image that consciously set the Europeans apart from those they governed and codified as other. In 17th century representations of Table Bay, the limits of this fractured knowledge relied on the invention of a generic 'Hottentot'. The cosmopolis (see Chapter Two:21) rested upon general suppositions that included the privileging of reason and

rational thought as tantamount to the assertion of the European state and its stable social hierarchies. That the European colonialists engaged in scientific cartographic practices was taken as proof of the order of their rule compared with the seemingly inadequate conceptions of space held by the Khoikhoi and Africans generally.

Regardless of specific economic motives for exploration, the discovered territory is already a product of cultural displacement tied to the imaginary geography of representations and narratives, which ever since rulers sent out ships and conquerers, have covered foreign space by asserting, measuring, describing and inscribing reality. This is a process in which, in theatrical terms, the unknown is made visible performatively. By staging it within the *mise-en-scene* of the landscape prospect and recollecting it into a memory and history not of its own , the unknown appears through the mechanics of metaphor.

Imperial history's preference for the facts of forts and clearings obscures that it is in a prior spatial history that colonisation occurs. This spatial history is not a linear procedure, but a process characterised by the spaces metaphors make. It is a journey inhabited not by a collective moving eye, but by a plurality of subject positions and identities. These elisions and lacunae within the grammar of imperialism undercut how the founding of Table Bay may be seen in the Collection to constitute a homogeneous and stable image of the past. This is done by highlighting what imperial history relies on for authority -- "the gaze from nowhere" (Keith & Pile 1993:31) -- and retrieving a sense of how meanings are constructed through positioning or plays of difference by an embodied traveller or viewer located in particularities of space and time.

CHAPTER FOUR

Criss - crossing the Frame

Forms of Curatorial Intervention

> The movements of deconstruction do not destroy structures from the outside. They are not possible or effective, nor can they take accurate aim, except by inhabiting those structures (Derrida 1976:24).
>
> There are only contexts without any centre of absolute anchoring (Tagg 1992:356).
> One may say that an object speaks in a different way ; or tells a different story, depending on its grouping with other objects (Quote from a letter from Haim Steinbach *cit.* Celant 1988:15).
>
> A text's unity lies not in its orign but in its destination. Yet this destination can no longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; he (*sic*) is simply that *someone* who holds together in a single field all the traces by which the written text is constituted (Barthes 1977:148).

Museological displays are particularly potent generators of knowledge of the past; this knowledge is neither singular nor static, although it is often perceived in that way. Pearce suggests that while "museum collections represent the stored material culture of the past, museum exhibitions are the principal medium through which the past is publicly presented" (Pearce 1989:1). In celebrating the ideology of the visible, museums provide a valuable site of theoretical and physical investigation of the relationship between classical representation and power. In their arrangements and non-arrangements of objects (visible and invisible histories), museums embody hierarchies, limits and assumptions of a system of knowledge consolidated during the Enlightenment. It is precisely at this legislative frontier -- between what can be represented and what cannot -- that the postmodernist operation is being staged. Its aim is not to transcend representation, but to expose that system of power that authorises certain representations while blocking, prohibiting or invalidating others. The past and its tangible memorials -- museums -- are increasingly becoming a political issue in the broadest sense and are being contested in many areas of cultural criticism.

The reconstruction of history, the recovery of repressed pasts and voices, the reframing of the present, the dismantling of mythologies, the re-fictionalisation of experience, the arresting of identity: such tasks and processes are now under the purview of multiple disciplines and practices (Decter 1993:118). Cultural anthropologists, museologists, historians, postmodern philosophers, visual and conceptual artists and filmmakers are finding common ground in the desire to produce interdisciplinary interventions which challenge naturalised identity and power formations.

Museums have traditionally been assumed to operate outside zones in which artefacts change their meanings according to their contexts. This assumption has given museums their value as laboratories for establishing the cultural identities of society (Skotnes and Payne 1994:1). The museum has not been seen as a place where competing claims for history can be played out, but as a bias-free institution, concerned with objectivity and the production of a single, authoritative narrative for public enlightenment. There has been little sense of the cultural fragmentation and crisis of legitimation that has affected other, more theoretically alert, areas of cultural production, nor recognition that we now live in a society in which difference and discontinuity rightly challenge ideas of totality and continuity. In the absence of theory, museum work is still considered to be non-intellectual, practical work, the practical creation of taxonomies and the practical arrangement of the evidence -- the objects -- to produce master narratives (Pearce 1989:144). How museums assign meaning to places, spaces, history and time forms the internal architecture of museological master narratives.

Framing the past involves various levels of inclusion and arrangement. While European artefacts are displayed in cultural museums and galleries, those of non-western cultures are and have generally been represented in displays of ethnography and the natural sciences. Which objects enter which collections inform how the past has, and continues to be, constructed. The obviousness of particular constructions of

history is axiomatically reinforced by their inclusion and arrangment (the classification) of certain objects in certain collections. Beyond the internal methods of display such as captions and accompanying literature, is a text comprising innumerable diverse, often contradictory strands, woven from the wishes and ambitions, intellectual, political, social or educational aspirations of collectors, museum curators, directors and scholars who are in turn, also socially constructed.

There are two important lines of enquiry which I want to develop here. The first question centres on whether meaning resides primarily in the objects themselves or whether the most significant meaning is determined by their context in the museum. Paul Valery despaired of whether objects in museums can claim to offer any meaning at all.[1] In his essay on the Valery Proust Museum, Adorno argues that the German word, *museal* ('museumlike') has unpleasant overtones "in that it describes objects to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship and which are in the process of dying . . . Museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association. Museums are the family sepulchres of works of art" (Adorno 1982:175). Adorno insists upon this museal mortality as a necessary effect of an institution caught in the contradictions of its culture and therefore extending to every object contained there.

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[1] The origin of the museum is often given as the Ptolemaic *mouseion* at Alexandria, which was (whatever else it may have been) first and foremost a repository of knowledge, a place of scholars, philosophers and historians (Vergo 1989:1). The modern museum has been traced back to the private collections of Renaissance princes and statesman. These collections -- the *studiolos* and cabinets of curiosities -- contained art, artefacts, antiquities, scientific instruments, minerals, fossils, human and animal remains, objects of every conceivable kind. They served not only to display wealth, power and privilege, but also as places of study.
The process of transformation from a private collection to a public institution marks the emergence of the term 'museum', although the form of the museum which we associate with the name appeared later. Smith asserts that the first usage of the word 'museum' in the sense not just of an antique institution dedicated to the study of the Muses, but as a modern institution which might contibute to the advancement of learning, is recorded by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as being in 1683, when Elias Ashmole's donation to Oxford University was referred to in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society as a 'Musaeum' (Vergo (ed.) 1992:6-7).
When first established in 1660, the aim of the 'Repository' of the Royal Society was to assemble a complete representation of nature and record a rational account of the causes of things. Hooper-Greenhill explains that the Society intended to draw up a new table of knowledge, realising that in drawing up a differentiated and identified table of specimens, they would also create a new language of description (see Hooper-Greenhill 1989:66) (see Chapter two of this document:25-26).

An assumed role of the museum (as promoted officially from the second half of the 19th century[2]) is to provide a safe, neutral environment in which artefacts will be removed from the day-to day transactions which lead to the transformation and decay of their physical appearance. This neutrality has been understood to extend to a preservation of the inherent meaning of the autonomous object. The clarity of the meanings of objects are attributed to qualities which the object itself is understood to possess, rather than as a function of a given context. This assertion has been seriously contested.

Weil (1990), cited by Skotnes and Payne (1994) suggests that an exhibition itself, rather than its individual components, determines the most significant meaning. This tension between the materiality of objects of material culture and their inscription within discourse is a question is at the centre of the debate about the role of material culture more generally. Hodder suggests that

> there is little interest in the thing itself. . . . We dig up material as much as we dig up ideas. And we wish to see the object *both* as an object, the result of processes of production and action, *and* as a sign, since the object . . . can itself be a signifier for other concepts (Hodder 1986:47, emphasis in the original).

However, as Weil's argument underlines, there is a tendency for the materiality of material culture to collapse into discourse. Molino, quoted by Hall (1993), draws a distinction between objects as constituted in past symbol systems and objects as transcribed in successive texts: artefacts from the past are always available as "irreducibly new" signs different from one another, although when they refer to the same source they inevitably refer to one another setting up chains of cross-reference (Molino 1992: 17 *cit.* Hall 1993:15). Although the materiality of objects is irrefutable, this materiality does not constitute a single, closed text. This is also not to suggest that it is impossible to historicise artefacts, but rather that significance resides less in retrieving original meanings than in its present context (s). In that it is impossible to speak of an object without in some way inscribing it within particular discourses (and not others), it is impossible to separate the meaning of an object from its context which in the final instance frames the meaning of the work.

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[2] See Smith in Vergo (ed.) 1992:8.

The second question revolves around the kinds of histories that museum exhibitions are able to tell. In the field of social history, objects represent only part of the story. Jenkinson argues that there are many aspects of social history that are not revealed, or very inadequately revealed, through the mobilisation of objects. These include many of the most intimate life experiences: birth, sexuality, death and the infinite range of tastes, emotions, ideas and psychological states that punctuate and enliven those life experiences (Jenkinson 1989:145). Also we need to examine the conditions and criteria under which certain objects are collected and housed and not others. In relation to the William Fehr Collection, we need to be sensitive to where gaps in the collection represent major historical silences. How, for example, can we equate the incommensuarable narrative of the virtual genocide of the Khoi within the space of the collection? The problem lies less in the category of pictorial Africana itself, despite its stated hierarchies of taste and discernment (see Chapter One:2) or with the idiosyncratic habits of particular collectors, than in the claims made for such representations of public history in the context of cultural ideological state apparatuses like the museum at the Castle or celebrations like the 1952 Tercentenary Festival.

While the task of museums of art(efacts) has usually been assumed to be "the judicious assemblage of objects and images deemed particularly evocative of time, place, personality, mentality and the artisanry or genius of certain societies, groups, races or individuals", Preziosi (1993:299) points out that museums frame objects with respect to viewers such that the framing itself predisposes the viewer towards certain kinds of conclusions. "In this regard the institution of the museum functions in a manner not unlike the diagrammatic or visual logic of scientific demonstration, wherein the actual arrangement of evidence itself constructs the 'truth' of what is intended -- conclusions regarding origins, descent, influence, affiliation, evolution, progress, historical direction, the homogeneity or heterogeneity of the mentality of an age, place, people, class, race or individual" (Preziosi 1993:299).

It is this realisation that opens up the space of critical intervention, shifting traditional art-historical preoccupations with describing and evaluating artefacts as autonomous towards an open-ended questioning of the role of the production of meaning in museums and representation as a conceptual system more generally. In relation to histories staged by the museum, viewers occupy a kind of panoptic position so as to survey or examine those histories through their circulation in and among a variety of articulated spaces containing various forms of historical evidence. But, as Preziosi suggests, this view straddles two definitions of history. The Fehr collection, as an example, embodies a familiar model for articulating museological space in which a given space --a set of rooms in a historical monument -- have been decorated in such a way as to simulate a sense of period ambience (refer Chapter One:2-3). The significance of the individual works is a complex function of multiple relationships between all the elements of an environment constructed to simulate a sense of the original context of the works. However, at the same time as we are being asked to image a prior, original meaning for these works, the museum stages a vision of the past "as that from which we would like to be descended, as that which prefigures our presentness, our modernity " (Preziosi 1993:299). In other words, the museological framing of the past is only in part sepulchral: "the museological past is anticipatory, and its 'history; is teleological -- ordered, oriented, and arrowed, focused on the present" (Preziosi 1993:299).

Preziosi reiterates that great European national and civic art museums of the late 18th and early 19th centuries were organised to stage the dramaturgies of modern nation states: "in this regard the origins and development of the great civic museums of art were inextricably bound to the formation of national, imperial and ethnic identities, and the 'histories' staged therein were (and remain) closely tied to the definition and legitimation of such identities" (1993:299). The aim of these institutions was to make (invisible) legacies visible and palpable in an autonomous accessible space where History could be surveyed and walked through from a point of origin to the present age.

> In that sense, museums became places where the individual viewer or visitor could literally 'perform' a collective history as, in effect, an *agent* of the particular modernity of which

> one's own country was a notable, or even the archetypal exemplar. . . . Museums of art are thus anamorphic[3] instruments in social life -- places where 'the past' is transformed into that which gives meaning and direction to the present. Correlatively, the present is staged as an anamorphic point from which the past may be seen as making sense (Preziosi 1993:300).

The underlying order of the museum is correlative and complementary to the rhetorical order of the discourse of classical representation. Museums do not reflect the past: they are social instruments for the fabrication, production and maintenance of the present in relation to the past. The ideological value of this (re) presentation is reinforced within the articulation of the body and history. "Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history" (Birringer 1994:206).

In a number of crucial ways, conceptual artists since the 1960s have addressed questions at the very heart of the critical, historical and theoretical developments outlined here. Exhibitions in Europe, the Americas and recently South Africa curated by artists and non-museum professionals have begun to challenge the authority of the institution and its historical taxonomic and teleological assumptions. These ideas are currently being debated in many areas of South African scholarship.[4] Situated at the crossroads of institutions of art and political economy, of representations of social identity and everyday life, this work does not bracket objects or art for formal or perceptual experiment, but rather seeks out its affiliations with other practices in the culture industry and elsewhere (Foster 1985b:99). These cultural practices make us conscious of the variety of ways in which we are recruited to identify with images that appear to be natural, inevitable, universal and immutable.

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[3] Anamorphosis (from the Greek, *anamorphoun*, meaning to transform) refers to an image or drawing distorted in such a way that it becomes recognizable only when viewed in a specific manner or through a special device (Collins English Dictionary 1979:51).

[4]Notable examples of interventions in South African museums are two projects of the Axeage Private Press: the exhibition *Sound from the thinking strings* at the South African Museum 1991 curated by Pippa Skotnes and the exhibition *Face Value: old heads in modern masks* at the South African National Gallery 1993 curated by Malcolm Payne. Payne's exhibition involved recontextualising the Lydenburg Heads in an art context as opposed to a liminal ethnographic one (as displayed in the South African museum). This exhibition contemplated the meaning of the heads and the manner in which they can serve as a point of departure for understanding material things and their representations. Another example of such an intervention is Patricia Davison's recontextualisation of the Bushman diorama at the South African Museum.

According to Barthes's theory of the text "as reproductivity rather than reproduction" (1981:39), history can never be seen as finished or closed off: historiography remains a sustained investigation into what is still happening rather than what has already happened. This has important political implications insofar as it de-centres the meaning of historical events by drawing the artist or reader into the text as another text in an intertextual interplay. The viewer or artist is no longer a stable and autonomous subject outside history, but intervenes in a process rooted in factors like gender, race, class, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Instead of emphasising common denominators and spatio-temporal continuity in history, these historiographer artists analyse the spaces of dispersion and heterogeneous temporalities (Young 1990:78).

Today the most productive forms of cultural criticism attempt to re-historicise the present by working against the apparent closure of imperialist fictions in various ways. The critical re-construction of historical knowledge through the matrix of the present is a project shared by a number of contemporary artists. While these artists use many different forms of production and modes of address (photo-text collage, videotapes, critical texts, appropriated, arranged, or surrogate art works, etc), they are alike in that each treats the public space, social representation or artistic language in which he or she intervenes as both a target and a weapon (Foster 1985b:100). This practical intervention entails a shift in position:

> The artist becomes a manipulator of signs more than a producer of art objects, and the viewer an active reader of messages rather than a passive contemplator of the aesthetic, or a consumer of the spectacular. This shift is not new -- indeed the recapitulation of this work of the allegorical procedures of the readymade, (dadaist) photomontage and (pop) appropriation is significant -- yet it remains strategic if only because even today few are able to accept the status of art as a social sign entangled with other signs in systems productive of value, power and prestige (Foster 1985:100).

Moving away from the text as a single line of words releasing a single theological meaning (the message of the Author-God) (Barthes 1977:148), this art plays special attention to site, address and audience. These situational aesthetics, initially articulated largely in relation to the hegemony of modernist formalism, have been occurring since the 1960s in the varied institutional critiques of such artists as Daniel Buren, Michael Asher, Hans Haacke, Marcel Broodthaers, Lawrence Weiner and

Joseph Kosuth. Buren, Asher, Haacke and Broodthaers particularly (among others) have in their critical writings and works *in situ* sought "to reveal the ways in which the production and reception of art are institutionally predetermined, recuperated and used" (Foster 1985b:101). These artists approach the empty space left by the artist's disappearance from perspectives which highlight a number of questions which modernism with its exclusive focus on the artist as author-creator, either ignored or repressed. These questions shift attention away from the work and its producer and onto its *frame* or con-text -- first by focusing on the location in which the artwork is encountered, and secondly by insisting on the social nature of artistic production and reception (Owens 1992:126). Sometimes, following Derrida's assertions, the work insists on the impossibility of ever distinguishing a work from its context; in other instances the work is *all* frame (as in Lawler and Mc Collum's 100 hydrocal sculpture pedestals set on bases and bathed in spectacular light, titled *For presentation and Display: Ideal settings* (1984), in which 'art' is displaced by its own spectacle). More often than not, however, as Owens suggests, "the frame is treated as that network of institutional practices (what Foucault would have called discourses) that define, circumscribe and contain artistic production and reception" (Owens 1992: 126).

Before going on to deal with a selection of artists for whom museology is an identified medium, I first want to explore some of the ways in which certain conceptual artists have worked with the form of knowledge found in museums -- with didactic, museological concepts of labelling and naming in relation to other (dis-or misplaced) orders of discourse.

Before his death in 1976, Broodthaers, taking cues from Duchamp's *Box-in-a-valise* (1936-41), among other examples, erected fictional museums commemorating how history is always a re-invention of the past that finds its articulations in the form of persuasive narratives. Reversing the roles of artist and curator, Broodthaers allegorically switched the ways in which the museum acculturates heterogeneous objects and activites as art. In his *Musee d'Art Moderne - Department des Aigles,*

Section XIXeme Siecle (Museum of Modern Art, Eagle Department, 19th century section) (fig. 29) he constructed an imaginary museum of various installations held in the living room of his home between 1968 and 1972. For the inaugural exhibition he displayed postcards of famous French paintings, along with the paraphenalia of an exhibition. Packing crates of the kind customarily used to transport works of art had the words "PICTURE", "WITH CARE", "TOP" and "BOTTOM" stencilled on them. During the opening and closing "ceremonies", a van belonging to an art shipper was parked outside in the street; the opening also included a discussion of the social responsibilities of the artist. Broodthaers presented "the shell of an exhibition, but without its normal substance" -- a remark resonant of the empty egg and mussel shells which he often employed (Owens 1992:126). Broodthaers preoccupation with the dialectic of container/contained could be seen, for example, in *Bureau de Moules* (1966) in which he placed on a sideboard mussel and egg shells in numerous parallel combinations in a cabinet, a pan, a bucket, in a suitcase. The container/contained theme suggests infinite regress: the cabinet (or bucket or suitcase) contains the shells, but the shells are containers themselves. These works bring up questions of whether meaning and value are intrinsic properties and of the role of the container in determining the form of what it contains. At the same time he suggests that museological meanings are less an inherent function of the artefacts themselves than of their temporary context in the museum, thereby dispelling the myth of permanence associated with the meanings of objects in museums.

Broodthaers extended this interrogation of the container into a number of works dealing with the relationship between language and image. In *La Salle Blanche* (The White Room, 1975) (fig. 30), Broodthaers, echoing Arakawa, set words like "light", 'shadow", 'sun" and 'clouds" high on a wall and lower down the names of things found beneath the sky, such as "water", "coast", "images", "eye", "museum" (McEvilley 1989:109). This form of drifting and shifting categories appears in nonverbal form in *La Malediction de Magritte* (Magritte's curse, 1966) (fig. 31), where a printed photograph of a blue sky and a painted blue sky, set together on a panel, are fronted by shelves holding four jars of cloudlike cotton wool, two of them

painted blue on the inside to match the image behind them. The deferral of meaning suggests that nothing is self-sufficient or stable. Much of Broodthaers' later work investigates the relationship between labels and things. *Sculpture* (1974), for example, is a suitcase of bricks with the word "Sculpture'painted on it. The container/contained dichotomy is combined with that of the thing and its label, and of the presence of the thing and its representation. The milk bottle painted with the word *lait* (milk) (1973) reproduces the common relationship between container and label: the bottle contains what the label denotes. However, in the coffee pot inscribed *ecrit* (writing) (1967), the label, not the vessel, contains the thing named in the label. In a 1972 installation, Broodthaers exhibited 300 images of eagles from different historical periods (some of them artworks,some ancient images, some commercial objects, packaging and so forth) each with a numbered label declaring "This is not a work of art" in three languages -- conflating Duchamp's tactic of designating something as art and of Magritte's declaration of non-identity (*This is not a pipe*) (Owens 1992:127). The label is a thing in its own right; it changes situations, multiplies categories and creates differences. Broodthaers uses the label as a form of counterlabelling to free labelled things from their assigned categories.

These idea of didactic pointing and labelling seem to link Broodthaers' *Musee d'Art Moderne* pieces with his use of the alphabet. Recalling the teaching of the alphabet to a child, the alphabet functions as a method of discipline and control. Broodthaers undermines it in various ways. *Palette P* (1974) shows letters of the alphabet besides colours on a painter's palette -- as, in the artist's words, "an attempt to deny as far as possible meaning to the word as well as to the image" (McEvilley 1989:112). *Le Tapis de Sable* (The Carpet of Sand, 1974) reveals an alphabet running around the borders of a square of sand on the floor, with a potted plant at its centre, suggesting culture's ensnarement of nature in a perceptual grid. Likewise, in *Casier avec Alphabet* (Cubbyhole rack with alphabet, 1967-73) a shelf of cubbyholes each has a letter painted inside it, suggesting the process of fragmenting reality into separate categories.

Many of Broodthaers' works raise the possibility of alien alphabets which might rearrange meanings and recreate the world. Reintroducing the theme of colonialism in his work, his book *A Voyage on the North Sea* (1973), presents a tour of two pictures, one a photograph of a modern sailboat at sea, another an old painting showing an 18th century fleet out on some colonialist enterprise or another. The reader is led page by page around these two images, observing cropped and enlarged details of them, as if pointed to invisible patterns of recurrence by an invisible docent (Mc Evilley 1989:114). Broodthaers allegorises the colonial project on a number of levels. On one hand, he seems to imply that the colonialist voyage out, its search for meaning elsewhere, is doomed to an enquiry into its own origins and alphabet -- in that sense, we never really arrive. In making of these images a pictorial alphabet, he implies the process of organising, categorising and arranging inherent in the colonialist diffusion of European category-systems ("alphabets"). In focusing on arbitrary patterns within the images, he draws attention to the way in which knowledge is not natural but culturally based. At the same time, the cropped details with their emphasis on the grain of the canvas (recalling Greenberg's modernist pronouncements) suggest another alphabet which threatens to disrupt the first. The inner pages of the book are uncut. Inside the covers of *A Voyage*, Broodthaers has written: "Before cutting the pages the reader had better beware of the knife he will be wielding for the purpose. Sooner than make such a gesture, I would prefer him to hold back that weapon, dagger, piece of office equipment, which swift as lightning, might turn into an indefinite sky" (McEvilley 1989:114). Thus Broodthaers draws attention to how knowledge is created and perpetuated performatively by individuals.

In his final book, a miniature (4 x 2.5 cm) atlas titled *The Conquest of Space: Atlas for the use of artists and military men* (1975), Broodthaers explicitly links military and artistic manoeuvres in a repetition of the themes of his two thighbone works of the mid 60's. A male human femur is painted in the colours of the Belgian flag, a female femur in the colours of the French flag (fig. 32). Three orders are layered in these images. First is the material, biological reality of the bones, a biological, pre-cultural, species-identity. Over this is laid a distinction (although invisible in these

images), partly biological, partly cultural between male and female; and on top of this is the cultural distinction between nations. Like the alphabet works, Broodthaers challenges naturalised cultural assumptions by working with their interstices. These works recall Bhabha's assertion that it is "in the emergence of the interstices --the overlap and displacement of domains of difference -- that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (Bhabha 1994:2).

Broodthaers' concern with what Todorov has characterised as a type of semiotic warfare (see Owens 1992:285) has an interesting correlation in the work of Lothar Baumgarten. Derrida has described this war as "the confrontation that opens communication between peoples and cultures" (Owens 1992:285) -- a battle fought by the activity of naming in which radically heterogeneous symbolic systems are brought into violent confrontation. In drawing attention to the rhetorical strategies of ethnographic discourse, rather than simply exposing racial and ethnic stereotypes, Baumgarten explores the historical construction of otherness and the exotic. His project for the 1984 Venice Biennale, in which he superimposed the topographical structure of the Amazon Basin upon the lagoon of Venice, referred to Amerigo Vespucci's naming of Venezuela in 1499.

> [On] sighting the northern coast of the continent that will eventually bear *his* name, Vespucci sees houses on stilts that appear to float on water or to hang suspended from trees. He is reminded of Venice and immediately names the place *Venezuela* -- little Venice -- thereby obliterating its Indian name and instituting in its place a proper (i.e. Spanish) name. Thus 'Venezuela' is inscribed within a system of cultural associations and values -- mercantilism, cosmopolitanism, Christianity -- that is alien to it. Henceforth the name will testify to, but also cover over the traces of the violence implicit in this -- or any -- historical act of denomination (Owens 1992:285).

Baumgarten's piece both commemorates and subverts Vespucci's act of naming by reversing its priorities. More significantly, by holding the two semiotic systems in tension, Baumgarten proposes a form of non-violent confrontation in which one culture is seen to displace another without obliterating it.

Carter asserts that it is in the act of naming that spatial history begins. For it is in the act of place-naming that space is transformed symbolically into a place that is a space with a history. And by the same token, the namer inscribes his passage permanently on the world, making a metaphorical word-place which others may one day inhabit, and by which, in the meantime, s/he asserts a place in history (Carter 1987:xxiv). The activity of naming functions for Baumgarten as a performative and political act of re-inscription. His film *The Origin of the Night* (1973-77) opens with a sequence of fifty-two names of tropical plants and animals --*carob, agouti, moskito, coati, mango* -- which slowly materialise one by one until they fill the screen, only to be replaced by a second set of names -- *iguana, imbauba, tatu, pirol, marimonda* -- which then disappear one by one (Owens 1992:284). At Documenta 7 in 1982, he exhibited a collaborative work in which he filled a chest with eagle feathers on which he painted the names of North American Indian nations -- *Tlingit, Heida, Tsimshian, Athabascan, Chippewa.* For his 1983 exhibition *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, he again invoked North American Indian names -- *Haskapi, Sitka, Bella Coola, Cowlitz, Cree* -- which he inscribed directly on the museum's walls (see fig. 33). In 1985, on walls decorated with decaying frescoes of domesticated animals in the nursery of the Castello di Rivoli in Turin, he inscribed the names of South American animals -- *pekari, zapallo, jabutti, manita, danta* . . . Another more recent project composed almost entirely of proper names was staged in a greenhouse in Caracas's Botanical Gardens. At the entrance Baumgarten inscribed the name "VENEZUELA" in Gothic capitals; inside he installed six living toucans bearing green plaques suspended to their perches. Each plaque bore the names of explorers, soldiers, prospectors and artists "whose collective project can be described as the discovery, conquest, colonisation, exploitation, indoctrination, study and representation -- in short, the *invention* -- of 'Venezuela' by and for the European imagination" (Owens 1992:293, original emphasis). (In a gesture similarly reminiscent of Broodthaers' metaphorical alphabets, Baumgarten included the score of the Venezuelan national anthem, but the toucans ate it!). Inserting the names of the European travellers, Baumgarten ironically refers to the genealogy of his own activity in the country. The context of a

greenhouse metaphorically serves to evoke a sense of the preservation of an alien culture, thus conjuring a sense of a rival semiotic.

Owens suggests that Baumgarten's recourse to (Indian) names might be said to constitute his primary medium. Again, as with Broodthaers, to whom Baumgarten pays homage, these names operate on a number of levels. They restore the memory of something that has been effaced or obliterated, in addition to challenging the European ethnographic project of visualising the other. Fabian has shown how rooted anthropology is in the direct *observation* of the other, and how this bias towards what he terms "visualism" is linked to the cultural and ideological conceptualisations of the geometries of Classical representation (Fabian 1984:106 *cit.* Owen 1992:288). For, Fabian asserts, within this order, "the ability to visualise a culture (is) almost . . . synonomous with understanding it" (Fabian 1984:7 *cit.* Owens 1992:288). A repeated theme of this project is how classical representation operates on the assumption of a transcendental viewer who is effaced in the narrative. Baumgarten's incantation of names offers an alternative spatializing order resonant of aboriginal songlines[5] which offer an alternative (and also poetic, mythic) experience of the landscape as invested with significance beyond the experience of the landscape in the totalizing, temporal sense of a prospect to be developed. Names function as "spaces of enunciation" (De Certeau 1984:104), evoking prior histories of bodies in social and symbolic space; histories that are preserved in multiple semiotic systems. Baumgarten's strategic use of names contradict the visual geometries provided by maps or panoramic landscape views. As such they disturb the rational, panoptical organisation of space displayed for purposes of administration and surveillance.

The practice of writing or otherwise working directly on the walls of the exhibition space -- as Broodthaers did in *La Salle Blanche*, and as many Conceptual artists have done, including Baumgarten, Weiner and Buren -- invokes another mainstay of the

[5] Aboriginal songlines imitate in form the lie of the land - similarly these names conjure not only the presence of a rival semiotic system, but allude to an invisible peopled landscape contained by the ghosts of the words. That some of the words are familiar (mango, for example) preserve the (spatial) routes of the dialectical nature of colonial encounters in South America.

Conceptual tradition. The emphasis of the primacy of the context over the thing viewed within it, and the consequent redefinition of the museum space as the material of the work, goes back to Duchamp's seminal realisation that a thing apparently not art can be designated as art by involving it in the museological system of signatures, galleries and so on. Duchamp also addressed the volume of the space of the museum as a material in his mile-of-string installation (1942). In his 1973 installation, *With and Beyond the Frame* (fig. 34) at the John Weber gallery in New York, Buren strung a series of striped banners down the middle of the gallery, extending out of the window and across West Broadway. Buren's stripes, set in specific art and non-art spaces for specific periods of time, stress the spatiotemporal order of the work of art in relation to the institutional frame.

Similarly, Asher since 1969 has foregrounded the functional delimitation of all artistc activity with his (dis)placements of different gallery/museum objects, services and spaces (fig. 35). In shows such as the one at the Claire Copley Gallery in Los Angeles in 1974, Asher removed the wall dividing the exhibition area from the office and storage space, excavating the institution's neutral looking surface to unveil its economic underpinnings and perceptual contextualisations.

Asher's *Antechambre* (1992) at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, extends the critique of the physical frame into a resistance to the use of the author as a bastion of value and point of closure in the circulation of signification. This installation consisted of two anterooms which provided a double portrait of two pivotal architects, the 1920s Los Angeles water-baron William Mulholland and the Belgian art deco master, Victor Horta. Horta designed the *Palais* in 1928, the same year as one of Mulholland's dams burst in LA, abruptly ending his career. The walls of the first room listed the dates of Horta's buildings and Mulholland's waterworks. In the second room, newspaper sequences formed a chronology of Horta's U.S. lectures on Belgian architecture and anti-German First World war propaganda. On the opposite sides of the room, Belgian newspapers documented Mulholand's dam disaster. Each of these sequences concluded with film reviews -- Horta was represented by a Belgian

film which portrayed the art deco style as a metaphor for decadence using his buildings as a backdrop; Polanski's *Chinatown* (1974), in which Jack Nicholson plays a detective who discovers massive fraud in the department of water and energy, represented Mulholland who headed that department in the 20s. These juxtaposed fragments de-centre the role of authorship in evolutionary narrative by shifting the focus onto "immobile and definitively fixed gaps in the general contour of the (museological narrative)" (Cohen 1992:89). Horta and Mulholland might have shared a similar milieu; both may have had similar effects on the circulation of ideology through architecture in their cities. They may have existed in the same California towns at the same time -- but they did not meet, nor did they occupy a similar role in their respective communities. But after viewing the 'facts', there is no satisfying answer to the expectation that there must be a link between the two.

> Here, the mystery's climax is always postponed. The centre, when approached, turns out not to be a secret clue but a mine field underneath the skin of the author who was charged with closure. When approached, the author-centre shatters, and the splinters of meaning fly off in innumerable directions. . . . [Asher] makes us aware that constructions of discourse are just that, abstract stoppages within vast chains of information, often ideological in intent (Cohen 1992:89-90).

Foucault saw the main function of the author to neutralize contradictions in texts (Foucualt 1979:158-9). The author provides a secure point of origin and return. Asher here subverts the notion of authorship by mapping and disrupting the gaps between the viewer, the work and the space of the museum. This critique of the role of authorship has been significantly challenged by artists such as Kosuth, Dimitrijevic and Wilson who parody traditional notions of art-historical authorship by claiming artistic authorship for exhibitions in which they have functioned as curators. These artists often use museum collections as their medium. In an interview for *Flash Art*, Kosuth explained his position:

> A major part of being an artist now consists in choosing. Between Duchamp and Steinbach, a lot of art has consisted of choosing. . . . Artists author meaning. When a writer sits down to write, we know they will use words that they didn't invent, still we credit them with being the author of the whole text. . . . The words I choose to put in my shows sometimes happen to be works made by other artists. But the meaning of the whole installation is mine. I should also add that I feel that the integrity of the individual work is also maintained. I acknowledge and take subjective responsibility for the surplus of meaning that the collective use of the works make. This is quite different than when a professional curator curates an exhibition, where the implication is that the expertise of the art historian is adjusting the meaning (and therefore the integrity) of individual works according to the dynamic laws of

> an objective science. One aspect of my installations is to make that process visible and more self-reflexive (Kosuth in an interview with Francesco Bonami 1991:155).

Whereas Kosuth tends to rely on the use of visual word-texts, often in the form of quotations, Dimitrijevic, in his series *Tryptichos Post Historicus*, for example, combined art works in museum collections with anonymous utilitarian objects from everyday life and organic live objects (figs. 36, 37 & 38).[6] The impact of these installations is not based upon the surprising and unusual combinations of heterogeneous objects, but in the play upon inherent fields of association and symbolic content.

In his installation, *The Play of the Unmentionable* (1990) (figs. 40 & 41), Kosuth sifted through the collections of the Brooklyn Museum in search of artefacts that relate in one way or another to the questions of how society deals with antisocial expression. Comprising more than 100 paintings, sculptures, prints, ceramics, texts, furniture, glass and sculptural fragments, the exhibition was constructed to create a play between an individual's views of art and how these affect moral judgements

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[6] *Tryptichos Post Historicus* refers to a series of works Dimitrjevic made for various important European museums after browsing through their collections (eg. The Tate and Centre Pompidou, for example). In assembling the art object from the three categories, he intentionally omits any reference to art historical organisation and interpretation. The impetus for each piece varied: it could stem from the content or formal considerations (colour scheme or composition, for example). The impact of the new work was not based on the surprising and unusual combination of elements, as much as on the play upon inherent fields of association and symbolic content (Dimitirijevic 1984:18). In his presentation of Malevich's *Dynamic Suprematism* (1916), the second part consisted of an iron and the third, several oranges. The picture, the household article and the fruit all belong to different 'alphabets' which we are inclined to separate conceptually, though they do not inherently differ as object-fields or sign-systems, argues the artist. Symbolically, his composition establishes a different set of relationships and linkages: the iron can be viewed as a source of warmth and energy in everyday life metaphorically evoking the warm colours of the fruit which stand as a symbol for organic perishability -- for all that is fleeting and transitory. The artwork by contrast could be read as a lasting symbol of the timeless values of art. Formally, the hard-edged quality of Malevich's pictorial constructions echo the metallic points of the iron, which on its pedestal, begins to resemble a work of art more than an everyday object.
In an exhibition at the Waddington Galleries in London (1981), he installed a pair of live peacocks in front of original paintings by Picasso, Matisse and others (fig. 39). The birds wandered around oblivious to the images with which they harmonised strikingly in terms of the form and colour of their feathers. Thus similarities and contrasts between art and nature were thrown into tension. Art in nature is programmatically confronted with nature in art. Symbolically, peacocks are associated with the Goddess Juno -- with pride and beauty, but also with clear vision. Nonetheless, these birds appeared blind to their situation.
Thus Dimitrijevic allows different orders of meanings and relationships to escape from traditional value judgements with important implications for the truth of empirical histories.

about representation and therefore larger moral and political judgements (Freedberg 1992:39). These materials ranged from an ancient Egyptian relief defaced by 4th century iconoclasts to a 1986 piece by Barbara Kruger. The works were installed in thematic clusters, as in the style of a salon, and included groups devoted to the nude (men, women and children in separate groups); Nazi art policy; violence; the Armory Show and the cultural deprivation of Africans by the American slave trade (Johnson 1991:108). A selection of texts were interspersed throughout the exhibition, neatly lettered in ivory on the warm, dark grey walls -- these texts were invariably quotations from a wide variety of sources, ranging from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Paul Joseph Goebbels. The result of all of this could be viewed as "an expanded field of thought" contained within what organiser, Charlotta Kutik called "a simulation of a tradition-curated exhibition" (Johnson 1991:108).

Johnson recalls that "to move through the exhibition was to experience a kaleidoscopic interplay of ideas".

> A photograph by Cindy Sherman of herself as a psychotic male killer was juxtaposed with an African *Power Figure* studded with nails; next to these a text by Stanley Diamond suggested a connection between the repression today of symbolic expressions of violence and the development and proliferation instead of highly technologized forms of mass killing. Close by, Ruth Benedict's commentary on the near-extinction of African culture among slaves in America suggested that censorship in its ultimate form is genocide, which echoed George Bernard Shaw's aphorism, lettered on another wall, "Assassination is the extreme form of censorship". Then you found yourself noting a disturbing parallel between accounts of morally horrified reactions to the Armory Show and Hitler's fantasies about the spiritual purification of art (Johnson 1991:108).

In another cluster, several illustrated Japanese sex books were juxtaposed with a label indicating that the Japanese did not view such imagery as shameful and immoral. Nearby were several photographs from Larry Clark's book *Teenage Lust* of teenagers engaging in intercourse, fellatio, masturbation and other erotic activities. A quote from Freedberg read, "Arousal by image (whether pornographic or not) only occurs in context . . . If one has not seen too many images of a particular kind before, and if the particular image infringes some preconception of what should not be or is not usually exposed (to the gaze) then the images may well turn out to be arousing". Finally, above and to the right was a painting by the late 19th century painter, William Sergeant Kendall of an idealised pre-pubescent girl who stands naked but for a robe

held loosely around her waist. Innocent enough, until one reads a quotation from a biography of Kendall which implied that the artist was a paedophile (Johnson 1991:108).

Kosuth's collage of images and texts sets up a dialogue between content and context, encouraging viewers to measure the individual and collective relationships and tensions between the speakable and unspeakable. He makes no overt judgements, but in putting viewers in front of their misconceptions and prejudices, invites us to see our own positions as multiple and contradictory. "Observing how easily we accept the Japanese pornographic pictures, how unsettling we find Clark's (they have a way of activating moralistic and possibly censorious impulses we may have thought we'd set aside) and how supplementary information disquietingly eroticizes Kendall's otherwise harmless image, we are led to ponder the play of the unmentionable not only within our culture and between different cultures, but within ourselves" (Johnson 1991:109). Referring in a sense to Broodtahaers' metaphor of the alphabet, Kosuth invokes how seeing is bound up in a pre-existing cultural,ideological or institutional conceptual grid.[7] In his non-hierarchical layering of voices he disrupts the stability of meaning as traditionally defined by the institution, drawing attention to that play of displacement which is at work within all languages and institutional structures, continually undoing the constraints they impose against proliferation and multiplicity and displacing the bounded space of signification into a network of heterogeneous

[7] Kosuth's repeated references to grammatical systems is evident in another recent piece at the Wurttembergergischer Kunstverein in Stuttgart (1993) entitled *A grammatical remark*. Presented in his signature manner -- a black room with white script --this piece forged a connection with the architecture of the space of the gallery. The viewer entered a boxing ring: surrounded by quotes from Wittgenstein, Benjamin and Schleierrmacher, and cut off from the outside, the borders of the space were well-defined. Punctuation marks (commas, parentheses) made of neon tubing appeared as windows to the world, like daylight entering from the outside, although they served here both to perplex and enlighten the viewer.
A quote from Schleiermacher began the line of text: "Aspects of the technical interpretation are generally confused with aspects of the grammatical interpretation". (This phrase, in German, is a chopped-up sentence fragment). Because of the size of the space, the sentences did not seem like coherent statements; the words seemed to be held together more by a wire than by a grammatical or other structure. In foregrounding the materiality of the sentence-fragment, Kosuth sets up a rival semiotic which interferes with the viewer's ability to make sense of the text. Here the borders between art and architecture, visual and written language, and statement and grammar were performatively enacted for the viewer as s/he moved around the room.

connections and disseminating references. In showing that there is not one view of the accumulated meaning of those fragments institutionalized by our society, Kosuth reminds us that a cultural act is also a political act.

The identification of cultural difference occurs when the individual articulation poses as a contradictory interference to norms (even though this interference may be, at best, fleeting and quickly co-opted). African-American artists such as Renee Green, Fred Wilson, Adrian Piper, Carrie Mae Weems, Cady Noland and David Hammons have focused their often biting commentaries on the traditional ways in which the museum -- of art or ethnography -- has constructed public narratives of culture and race around an essentially Eurocentric model. To this end, Wilson, has been infiltrating various museums and re-assembling their collections and display frameworks so as to illuminate the sanctioned repression of certain histories. In his recent installation, *Mining the Museum* at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore (1992)(figs. 42 & 43), he had for the first time an opportunity to expand his "palette" (as he calls his museological materials) beyond the visual language of display to include a real institution's acquisition history and collections management (Stein 1993:110). Occupying the entire third floor of MHS, the display extended through a linked sequence of eight rooms. Although this installation utilised techniques developed elsewhere (by Lawler, McCollum and Broodthaers, for example), here this conceptual framework was employed within the context of the recovery of the buried presence of racial minorities.

Armed with an educational broadsheet that read like concrete poetry (What is it? Where is it? Why?/ . . .), visitors entered the exhibition space to confront a display case which housed a 1913 advertising trophy in the shape of a silver-plated globe with *T-R-U-T-H* blazoned across it. At its base were several empty acrylic mounts labelled "Artist unknown, *c.* 1960s". The trophy makes ironic reference to an industry dedicated to the manipulation of truth; the empty mounts, now historical objects themselves, focused attention on the covert methodology of museum presentations (Stein 1993:112). To the right of the case below eye level, three low wooden

pedestals supported portrait busts of Henry Clay, Napoleon Bonaparte and Andrew Jackson (none of whom ever lived in Maryland), exemplifying those previously deemed worthy of sculptural representation and museum acquisition. To the left were three higher and empty pedestals that bore only small plaques proclaiming the names of celebrated African-Americans who were Marylanders -- by dramatising the absence of their portraits, Wilson found a way to reveal the biases and silences of History.

A case of chiselled arrowheads labelled *Collection of numbers 76.1.25..3.76. 1.67.11; white drawing, black india ink and lacquer, c. 1976* called attention to ways in which museums derive meaning not only from the objects themselves, but also from how the museum deals with them (Stein 1993:113). In his presentation of several paintings, prints and photographs, Wilson attached new labels providing identities for hitherto anonymous black figures. For example, a Benjamin Latrobe watercolour previously titled *View of Welch Point and the Mouth of Backcreek* (1806) is here called *Jack Alexander in a Canoe*. In another painting, a gallery spotlight periodically illuminated a shadowy slave child while a taped voice asked poignantly: "Who combs *my* hair? Who calms me when I'm afraid? Who makes me laugh?" (Stein 1993:113).

Wilson drew attention to the institution of slavery through creative signage and juxtapositions. An example is a standard exhibition case labelled *Metalwork 1723-1880* in which is set a series of Baltimore repousse silver goblets, urns and decanters next to a coarse pair of rusty slave shackles. In the estate inventory of goods and chattels to one Nicholas Carroll, *ca* 1812, a neat round hand recorded the value of slaves, cattle and horses in one, long list, recording that, for example, sixty-five year old Joshua would only cost $30 while eleven-year old Jacob was worth $425. In the most dramatic tableau of the exhibition innocously titled *Cabinet making 1820-1910,* a starkly constructed cruciform whipping post was surrounded by a variety of ornate Victorian chairs. "A potent symbol of the horrors of slavery, the post had hibernated in MHS furniture storage for decades (hence the irony of the classification "Cabinet Making") after having last been used in 1938 to punish a wife-beater at the Baltimore

city jail". Stein adds that as she faced Wilson's unpeopled scenario of punishment, she sensed her complicity as a viewer (Stein 1993:113).

In *Mining the Museum*, Wilson re-appropriated familiar modes of museum presentation for his own subversive ends, subtly parodying how Westernized representation has entrenched a delimited horizon of non-Western cultures. In this way, he exposed the invisible racial threads that are often an integral part of institutionalized representations of History (Stein 1993:114). Thus he suggests that classical methods of cultural anthropology, ethnology and art history have at many levels repressed significant components of other historical and cultural narratives, and furthermore that the archival logic of the traditional museum requires overhaul. Wilson's critical infiltrations symbolise an ideological raid on entrenched racism and hence a type of cultural re-empowerment.

Wherever one turns in discussing the presentation of artefacts in a museum there is the question of epistomology and how artefacts are ideologically constituted by individual viewers. An important aspect of the conceptual art-making tradition is the challenge to the role of the neutralized, stereotypical viewer.

As Owens has noted, it is in this stereotype that "the body is apprehended by language, taken into joint custody by politics and ideology . . . promot[ing] passivity, receptivity, inactivity, docile bodies" (Owens 1992:193-4). In Enlightenment science, "the body
. . . is directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold on it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs". Foucault continues that it is not primarily a question of making the body signify, but of making it into an object of signification (refer Chapter Two: 28). In the panoptic order of classical representation, the transcendental viewer is either positioned as a stable anchor in relation to the vanishing point, a collective moving eye and/or effaced altogether. In *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, Bryson writes

> Western painting is predicated on *the disavowal of deictic reference*, on the disappearance of the body as site of the image, and this twice over for the painter and the viewing subject. The stereotype addresses the viewer twice over, constructs him (*sic*) in two irreconcilable forms: as a potential donor of a vital quantum of solidarity and as that featureless vector of political and economic energy (Worshipper, Citizen, Consumer, Producer) (Bryson 1983:286).

The stereotypical reader is re-contextualised in conceptual art practice in different ways. The artists cited in this chapter work with the contradictions in our inherited cultural history, represented officially by museums, to show that there is not one view of the accumulated meaning of institutionalised fragments (of which the stable viewer is the passive recipient). They suggest that "what is equally the *material* being worked with is the contingency, the context and various other relations", including the multiply constructed viewer (Kosuth 1991:155, my emphasis). They assert possibilities of continously reconstructing historical knowledge in order to scrutinize how cultural power circulates throughout history and the present. These artists work with the passage of the viewer's body and his or her complicity within the ideological frameworks of art production. Broodthaers in *A Voyage on the North Sea* warns the reader of the danger of slicing the uncut pages; Wilson turns the viewer into one of a crowd watching an implied spectacle of public torture. Kosuth and Baumgarten remind us of how imbricated we are various conceptual and ideological 'alphabets'; in a subtle manipulation of the museological staging of meaning through metaphor and metonymy (analogy and juxtaposition) they unsettle us by layering conflicting orders of discourse within the passage of a show. They stage for us the techniques whereby we are interpellated as stereotypical subjects, proposing instead the mobilization of the spectator.[8] Others have taken this further by transforming the viewer into the subject of the work.

Sophie Calle, for example, in *Histoires de Musee* at the Musee d' art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1989), an exhibition in which twenty-two artists were invited to make interventions in the various collections housed in the building, staged a piece around

[8] For a fuller discussion of this subject, see Owens (1992:191-200) and Foster (1985b:109-114) on Barbara Kruger.

the absence of a work. She replaced Bonnard's *Nude in the Bath* (1937) with her drawings and the texts of interviews about the painting gleaned from various guards, curators and museum visitors. Here the image itself is presented as being secondary to how it is constituted by various viewers. For Buren, the unveiling of the institutional frame -- which includes the viewer -- can only occur by making the constraints of the frame visible from within, not from some imaginary vantage point outside it. "This is what the dominant ideology wants", he wrote, "that what is contained should provide, very subtly, a screen for the container": for Buren, the function of any work of art is to *conceal* the multiple frames within which it is contained (Owens 1992:130). Significantly, this includes masking its relationship with the disarticulated viewer (s). In a work of 1982, Buren constructed a wooden viewing tunnel in a public gallery. The gallery's paintings were propped up against the wall; they could only be viewed from windows in the tunnel which snaked across the room in such a way that the view would more often not be the work, (the view out) but the passage itself, (the view in) or someone else looking. In a gesture reminiscent of Broodthaers, Buren reversed the traditional hierarchies of container and contained by foregrounding viewing as a cluster of spatiotemporal activities.

As West suggested in his essay *The new cultural politics of difference* (1990), those artists and cultural critics who seek to reveal the systems of power that circulate through their familiar cultural territories encounter a paradox : while linking their activities to the fundamental structural overhaul of these institutions, these artists often remain financially or materially dependent on them. But by making the familiar exotic and defamiliarizing the ordinary -- making the visible a little harder to see -- it becomes possible to move towards developing a new critical relationship to the mythologies of history and the opacities of the present. This has profound political implications for museums as a particularly important site in which identities are formed and where they can also be contested.

CONCLUSION

The representation of history is one of the most politically charged areas of social practice for it is these representations that tell us where we are and put us there (Keith & Pile 1993:37). This project is about how to reconceptualize an exhibition characterised by its association with the triumphant beginnings of a history designed to unite white South Africa in a common heritage centred on the founding figure of its first European settler, Jan van Riebeeck.

The history which the Collection was seen to illustrate at its first public showing in 1952, was, as I have argued, necessitated by the ideological and economic needs of the burgeoning programme of apartheid. The tenuous victory of the Afrikaner nationalist alliance in 1948, coupled with the limited framework of political support afforded by Afrikaner nationalism, called for the mobilisation of a broader white settler nationalist rhetoric. This was a history quite consciously constructed as different from the partisan, militantly anti-British Afrikaner nationalist history of the first decades of the century; at the same time this earlier history provided some of the building blocks for the new history whose theme was the self-proclaimed role of the whites as bearers of civilisation. It was a history particularly strong on images of foundation and "building the nation" (*Historical Exhibition of Arts* catalogue 1952:5).

Rassool and Witz argue that it is ironical that Van Riebeeck is generally perceived as an icon of South African history because it was only in the 1940s that he began to be seen as a key figure in the accomplishment of South African nationhood (Chapter One:11-12), and transformed from a person involved in historical processes to an icon of national history. The twin themes of foundation and nationhood are suggested in the Collection by the prominent placing of the copies of the Craey portraits of Jan and Maria van Riebeeck. Nearby on the same wall of the centre room is the 17th century Benda painting of Dias planting a cross apparently at the Cape (?); on the wall opposite is the 19th century Gow copy of a 17th century portrait of Da Gama. This image of foundation, however, is a case of mistaken identity -- despite becoming

a household face as the image on the South African currency for thirty years, the Craey portrait is no longer regarded to be Van Riebeeck but a likeness of another VOC official, Bartholomeus Vermuyden (Carman 1994:94).

Notwithstanding literal inaccuracies in the labelling of the Collection, the central area in which this public narrative can be seen to be spurious is in the mechanisms whereby it constructs facts in the first place. The arrangement of images and objects is not sequential in that Fehr wanted to give the impression that the rooms were inhabited. In Chapter One, I argued this public narrative to be constructed on contradictory levels. In Fehr's writings and in the Tercentenary narrative, images are recruited as windows or freeze-frames within a sequential narrative located in the concept of chronology or temporal movement; materially, however, the manner in which the objects are displayed is dedicated to the simulation of a timeless historical space. These narrative frames cohere, however, in their assertion that history comprises a singular true reading which pre-exists its inscription in language and is recoverable in the form of discreet episodes harnessed within an evolutionary narrative and/or the simulation of a sense of generalised historical ambience (Chapter One:4). In this they comply with what Carter has termed the main elements of imperial history: a defensive appeal to the logic of cause and effect; the emergence of order from chaos and a preference for fixed and detachable facts (Carter 1987:xvi).

In Chapter Two, I argue that it is in relation to the naturalised and powerful conception of space as absolute during the enlightenment, that the most effective form of critical intervention can occur. The concept of absolute space was revolutionary in that, in assembling everything on the same epistemological table, it offered the illusion that meaning could be fixed in relation to all other meanings and in relation to a single, transcendent spectator. The general applicability of this framework (embodied by the museum) masked the fact that this putative fixity coheres in language and that different representations construct subjects in different ways that are neither singular nor stable. This construction achieves hegemony by eliding the multiple spatialities of these different discursive orders (Chapter Two:22). Meaning literally "seeing

through", *per-specere*, single-point perspective elides what it depends on for meaning -- the image's material support, and by extension the materiality of language. Space and language are inscribed within each other, but for the purposes of defining a form of intervention it is useful to draw attention to where they intersect.

The Collection is different from conventional museological displays in that it is preserved as a museum within a museum: it preserves not only its objects, but a form of container or frame determined by the collector. I am not, however, arguing that Fehr's interpretation is indubitably cast in this arrangement; only that it is an interpretation that has been naturalised at a number of levels.

I argue that the articulation of the Collection to the Tercentenary narrative is premised on the construction of space as absolute and that this is of crucial importance to how subjects and identities are interpellated. The Tercentenary narrative gains authority by erasing the spatialities of the spaces it subsumes at the same time as actively producing and reproducing binary differences "as a key strategy to create and maintain modes of social and spatial division that are advantageous to its continual empowerment" (Soja & Hooper 1993:185). This symbol of national unity was articulated specifically for whites (blacks, 'Malays', 'coloureds' and 'griqua' were accorded separate festival days). As the pageant highlighted, this theme of enlightenment temporized Progress (Light and Civilisation) with a negative sense of the indigenous populations as time-less or static. The dominant binary is associated with the positive values of a mechanised conception of time (as chronology) while space is seen to be bound by the impossibility of movement.

In different ways, Carter and Lefebvre suggest possibilities for conceptualising space and subjectivity in relation to representations of the past that resist the narrow reading of space as absolute. Carter argues that treating historical space as a given "has the effect of draining what is most characteristic of [the country's] history" (Carter 1987:xxi) -- which is that spatial history had to constitute it. Carter locates this process primarily in the metaphorical spaces of language. Lefebvre offers a

framework in which spaces are considered in terms of their interrelationships in three broadly delineated areas: that of spatial practice, representations of space and representational spaces (Chapter Two:36-8). In so doing he attempts to move beyond binary oppositions of race, gender and class and into the multiplicity of other spaces that differences make.

While these other spaces resist closure -- always unstable, contextual, provisional -- this is not to imply that histories and identities can be reduced to a disposable fiction (Chapter Two:32). Countermemory, particularly in this context, is not simply a matter of opening up the play of meaning, but of being aware of where gaps in the collection represent major historical silences and where absences can be identified as constitutive of presence. That is particularly necessary at the level of how 'facts' have been constructed in relation to the William Fehr Collection at the Castle.

The terms of my initial plan were that the viewer would be invited to view a curated exhibition in relation to the fixed exhibition in the Governor's rooms. Contrary to the mechanisms of the imperial gaze and the myth of the viewer as transcendent, my aim was to construct various kinds of viewing platforms to make the viewer aware of those (material, contradictory, multiple) processes by which we construct orders of knowledge -- in other words to emphasise not the works themselves but *how we look.* While I was mulling over these ideas, I realised that this plan is theoretically flawed. A unique aspect of the Collection is the illusion of permanence donated by the circumstances of its sale in 1964. One of the most effective forms of intervention could occur *within* this apparently permanent display, thus retaining the apparent fixity of Fehr's construction. Instead of moving the objects around to change the meaning, I decided instead to move the viewer. To this end, I decided to produce an acoustiguide to the Collection (there are none at present).

But instead of providing the answers (as expected of acoustiguides), I am offering a choreography in which a variety of signs -- opinions, credos, anecdotes, travellers' texts, historical facts and archival radio footage -- blend and clash within the space

and shape of a planned passage marked out for a viewer moving through the rooms. My primary aim is to show how there are only meaningful contexts without any centre of absolute anchoring and to emphasise the viewing process as being not about closure, but about looking for signs. This would also serve as a metaphor for the explorer/traveller's search for meaningful signs, beginning with the search for the first sight of land from the crow's nest.

The idea of turning the viewer into the subject of the exhibition is one which a number of conceptual artists have worked with in different ways. In his *Musee d'Art Moderne*, for example, Broodthaers put together all the *accoutrements* of an exhibition -- opening and closing ceremonies, packing crates, a van belonging to an art shipper -- "but without its normal substance" (Owens 1992:126). This inversion of the container/contained is one which he was to develop in relation to questions of whether meaning and value are intrinsic properties, and of the role of the container in determining the form of what it contains. At the same time, he suggested that the meaning of objects in museums lies less in any sense of immanence than in their temporary context in the museum, thus implying the possibility if infinite meanings in relation to infinite contexts. Extending this concern into a play of language, Broodthaers interrogated a relationship between labels and things, showing how labels, like museums and containers, change situations, multiply categories and create differences.

Broodthaers draws the viewer into his play of language in his work *A Voyage on the North Sea*, in which in inviting the viewer to cut the (uncut) inner pages, he warns of the weight of the viewer's intervention. By layering a number of semiotic systems (alphabets), he suggests that meanings arise in their interstices. This idea of bringing different semiotic systems into violent confrontation is a metaphor for the colonial programme -- in drawing attention to the rhetorical strategies of colonial disourse, an artist like Baumgarten explores the historical construction of otherness and the exotic, a practice he extends into a refiguring of colonial activities of naming.

It is significantly in the interventions of Kosuth and Wilson that the play upon inherent fields of association and symbolic content is made palpable in the museum context. Referring in a sense to Broodthaers' metaphor of the alphabet, in his *The Play of the Unmentionable* (1990), Kosuth at one level invokes how reading is bound up in pre-existing systems. At the same time, however, in his non-hierarchical layering of voices, he draws attention to that play of dislacement which is at work in all institutional structures. In showing that there is not one view of the accumulated fragments institutionalised by museums, and that this view is a function of a play of disseminating references, Kosuth asserts that a cultural act is also a political act. Wilson's *Mining the Museum* (1992) sets out to recover the buried presence of racial minorities in drawing attention to how meanings are made in a museological context. In so doing, he unearthed how racism is often an integral part of institutionalised representations of history.

These artists suggest that what is equally the material being worked with is the contingency and context of all the elements that interact in the staging of meaning in museums. They suggest enormous recuperative possibilities by redefining what it means to be an curator/artist and a viewer: "the artist becomes a manipulator of signs more than a producer of art objects, and the viewer the active reader of messages rather than a passive contemplator" (Foster 1985b:100).

My tour of the Collection comprises a thirty-five minute tour (with the possibility for a (potentially infinite) number of tours in which different and/or multiple subject positions are adopted). This tour, entitled *A Passage through the William Fehr Collection* is packaged as a viewing kit. Its aim is to exemplify an invisible and open-ended remapping of the Collection focused on the moving body of the viewer. The viewer is given a central place in the construction of real and imagined geographies of the past within the space of the Collection as the locus and site to which the audio-text is attached.

As with the examples of the conceptual artists I cited, and in relation to the ambiguities of images of Table Bay as discussed in Chapter Three, history becomes less a question of true or false histories of images in the Collection, but of a heightened sensitivity to the politics of difference. I argue that there are no identities or stories outside of contexts. Stories create the world we live in by defining its boundaries -- in this sense stories are frontiers; stories are also bridges in that they create passages between islands of activity. Every time stories are retold the world is created anew. But the stories we tell help to make our lives more certain in that in describing the world to ourselves, we are able both to manipulate it and move around in it (de Certeau 1984:122-30).

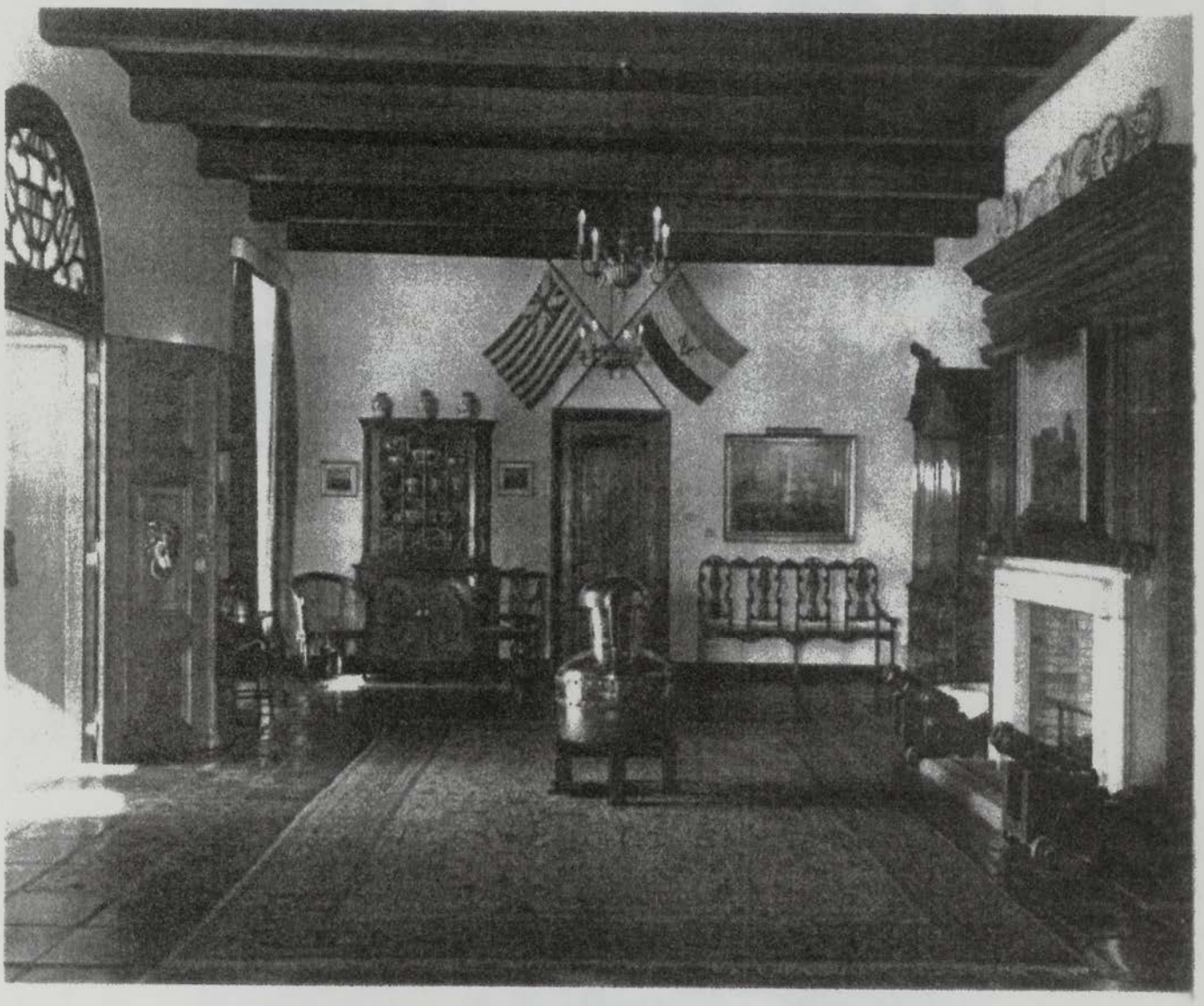


fig. 1

A MAN AND WOMAN AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

The picture of the Hottentots is of little value: note the indications of cicatrisation (q.v. in Index). The view of the hills is curious, with Herberts' impudent annexation of the Devil's Peak to his own name: incidentally, incorrectly shown as the highest of the three hills.

fig. 2

fig. 3

fig. 4

fig. 5

fig. 6

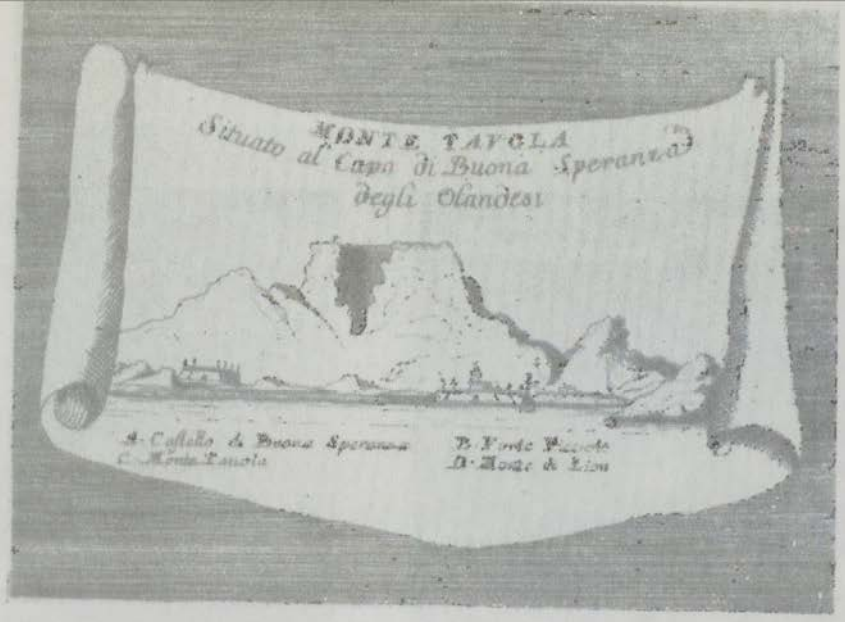


fig. 7

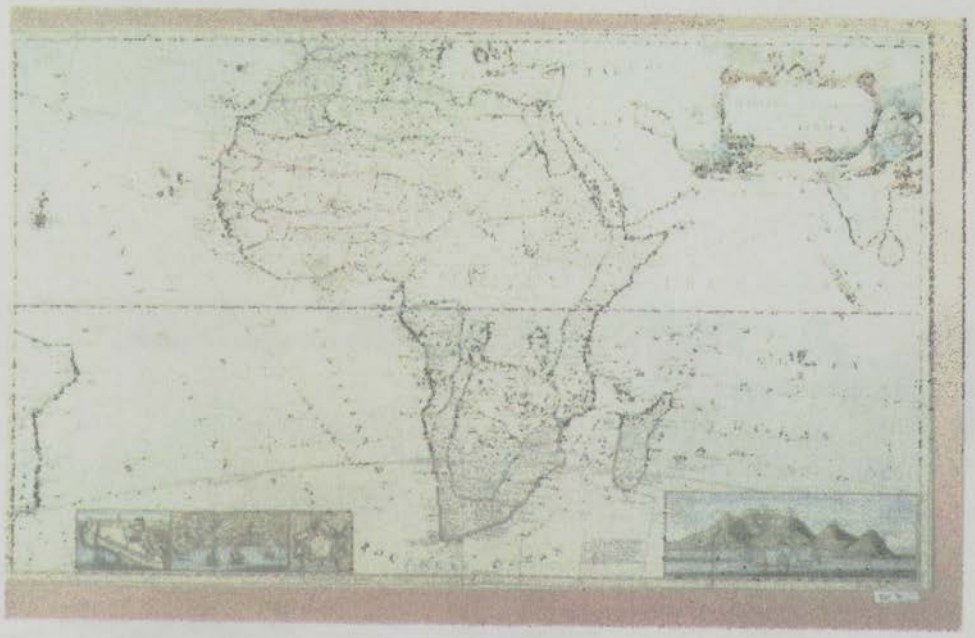


fig. 8

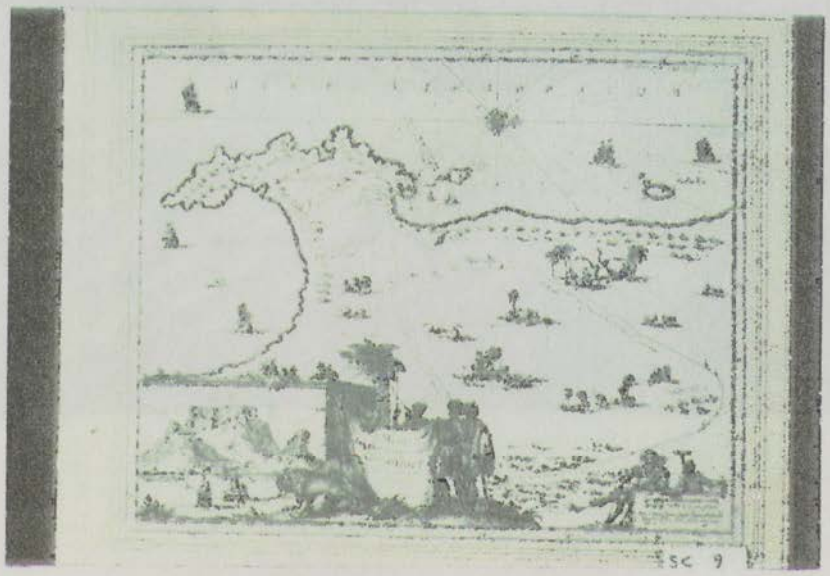


fig. 9

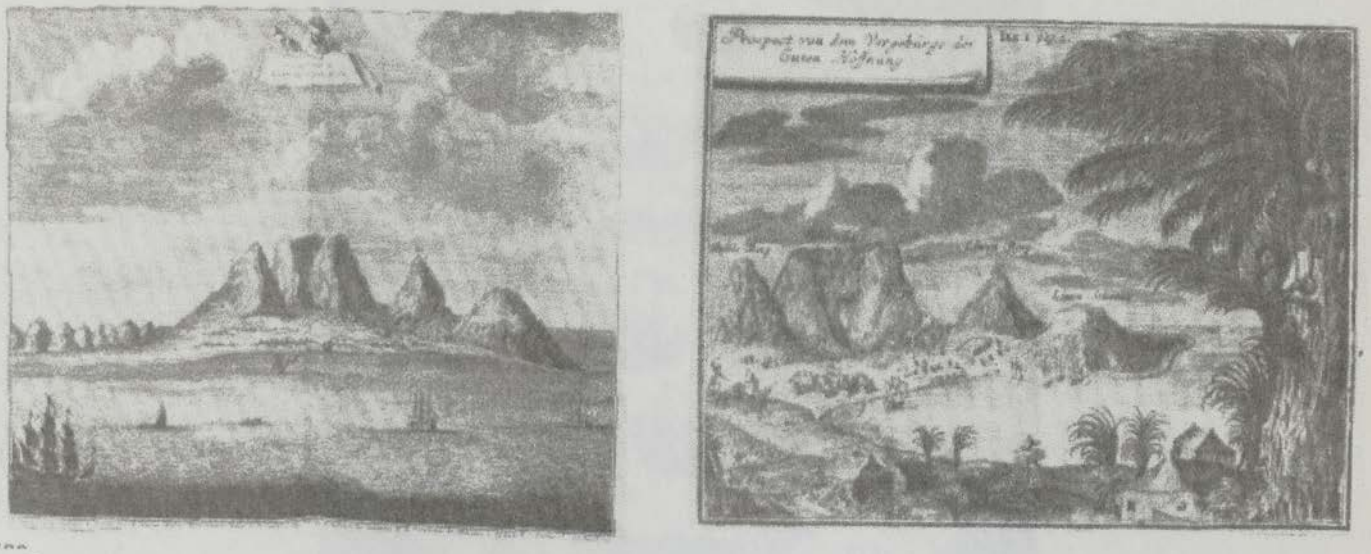


fig. 10

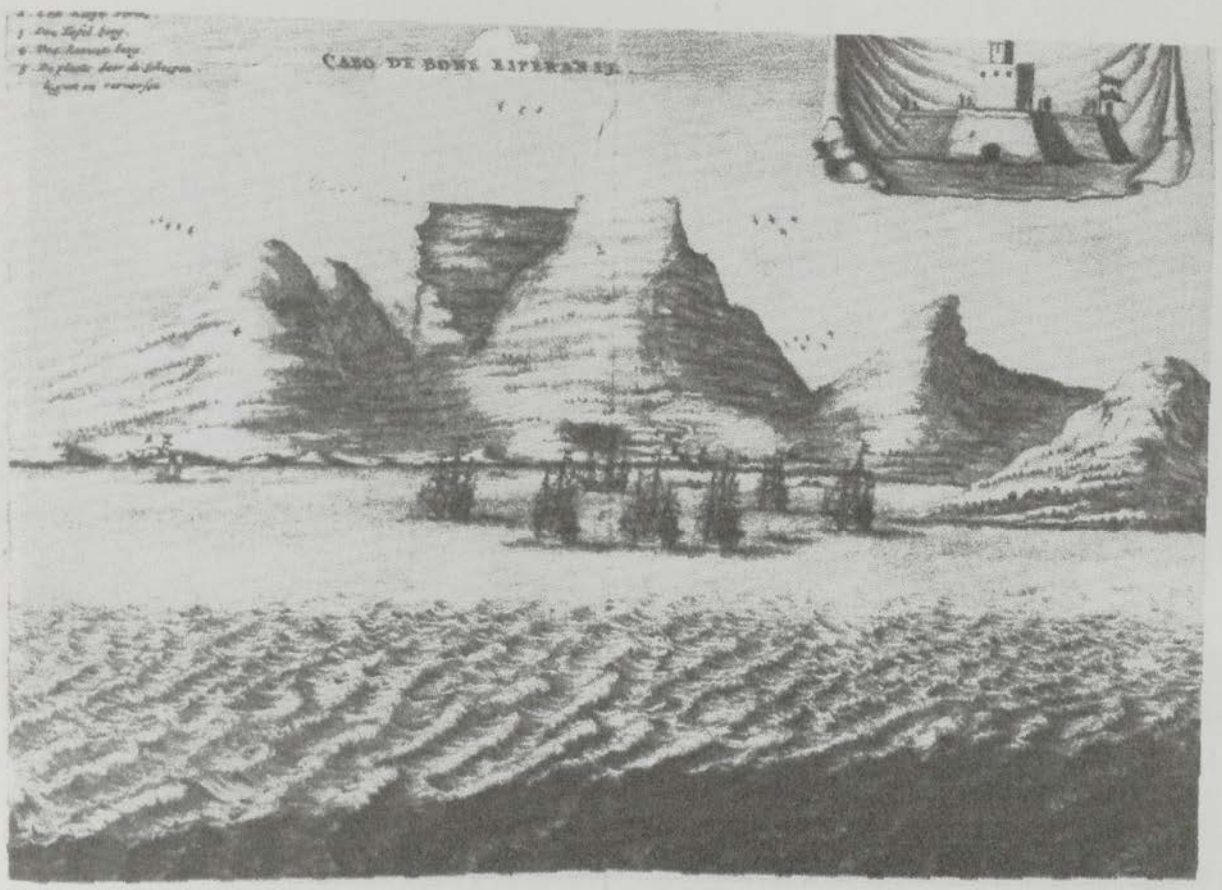


fig. 11

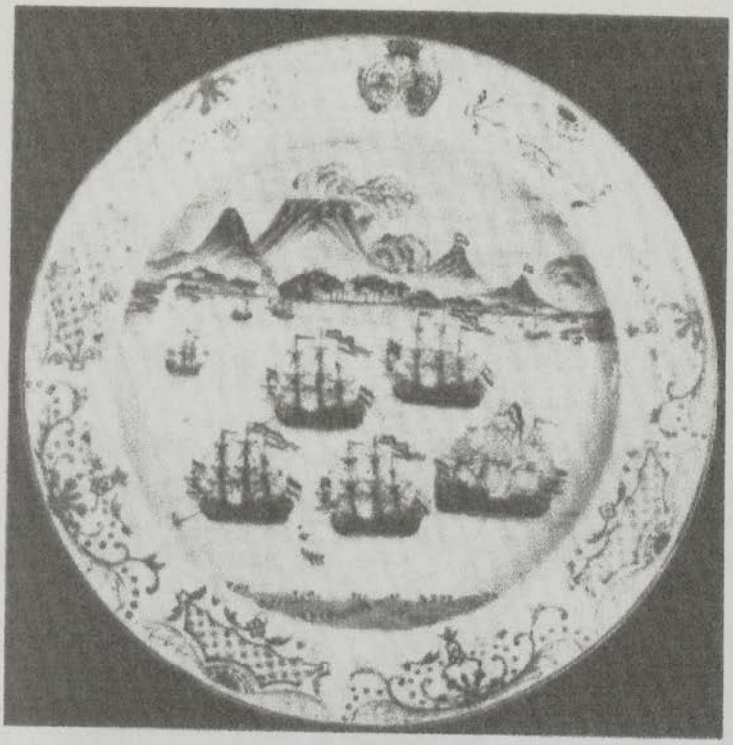


fig. 12

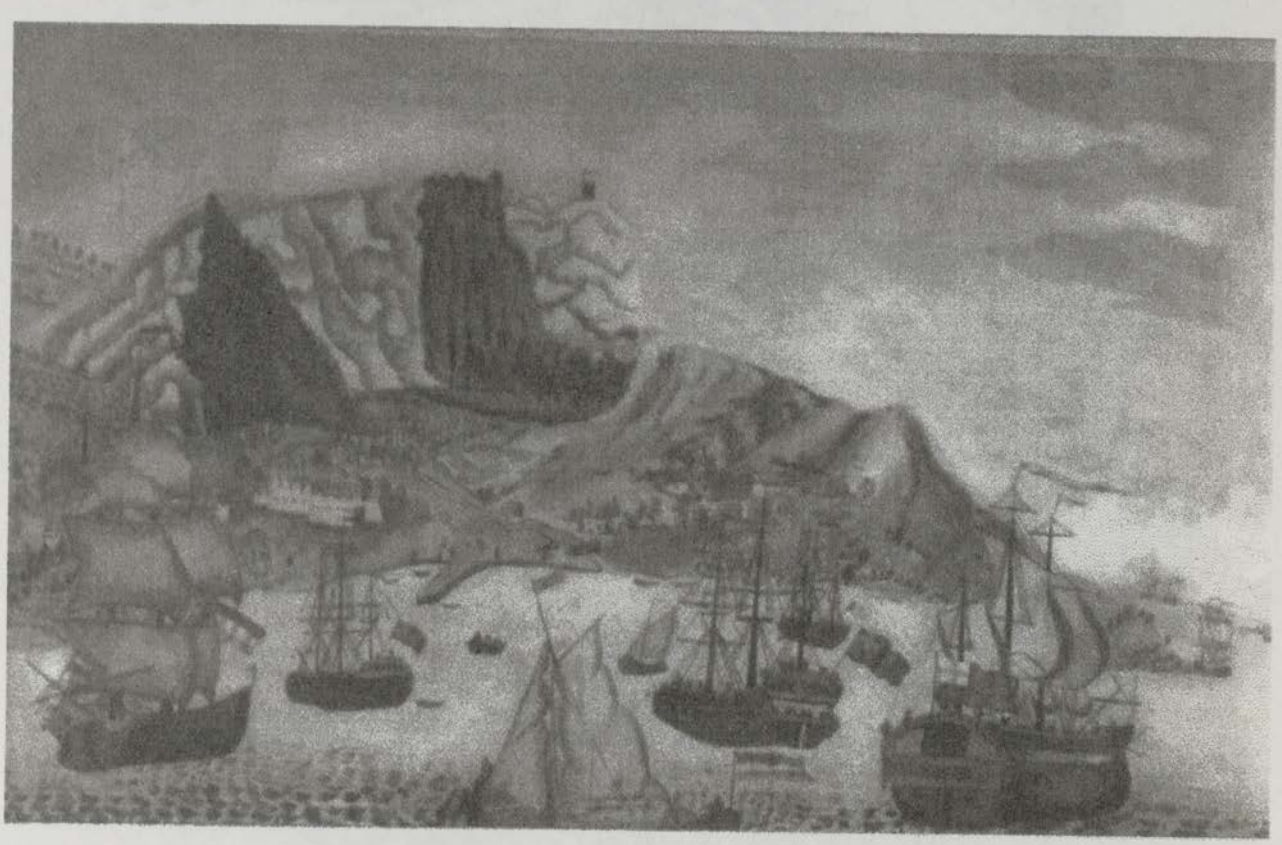
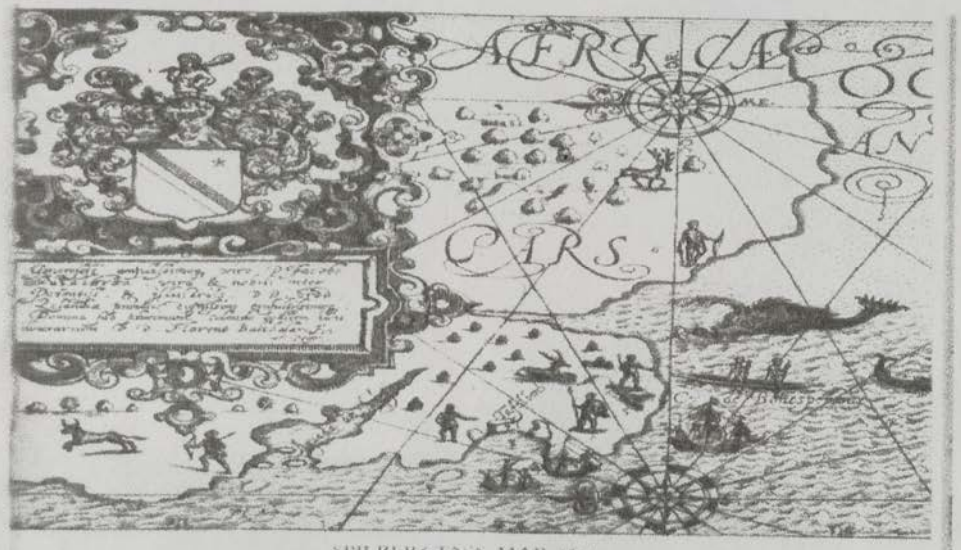


fig. 13

fig. 14

The extent to which Jan Huygen van Linschoten's late-sixteenth century map fuelled the expectations of the Dutch regarding the Cape's hinterland is evident from the references in the Journal, III opp p.302

fig. 15



SPILBERGEN'S MAP, 1601

From his *Historisch Journaal* . . . Delft, 1604(?); reprinted in L.V.48; the translation in the text (item 25) from Commelin has been checked with this. The Dutch captain reads its navigation: "The Table-Bay lies on 34 degrees four minutes, about fifteen miles to the North of the Caep de bon Esperance. Nr. 1, the Table Bay, 2, the Table Mountain which is seen from 9 or 10 miles at Sea. 3. Isla d'Elizabeth. 4. Ils de Cornelia. 5. the Caep de bon Esperance. 6. These inhabitants shewn here have a clucking speech like turkeys, and there are many harts and hinds here." The coat of arms is that of one of Spilbergen's patrons.

fig. 16

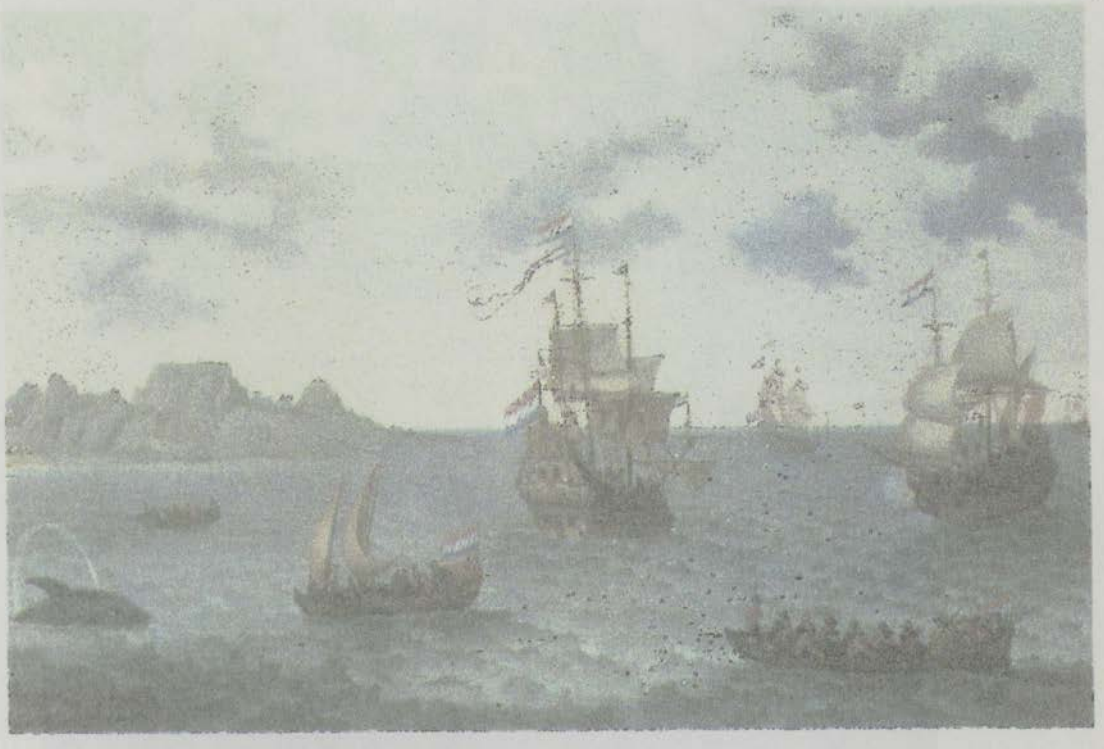


fig. 17

fig. 18

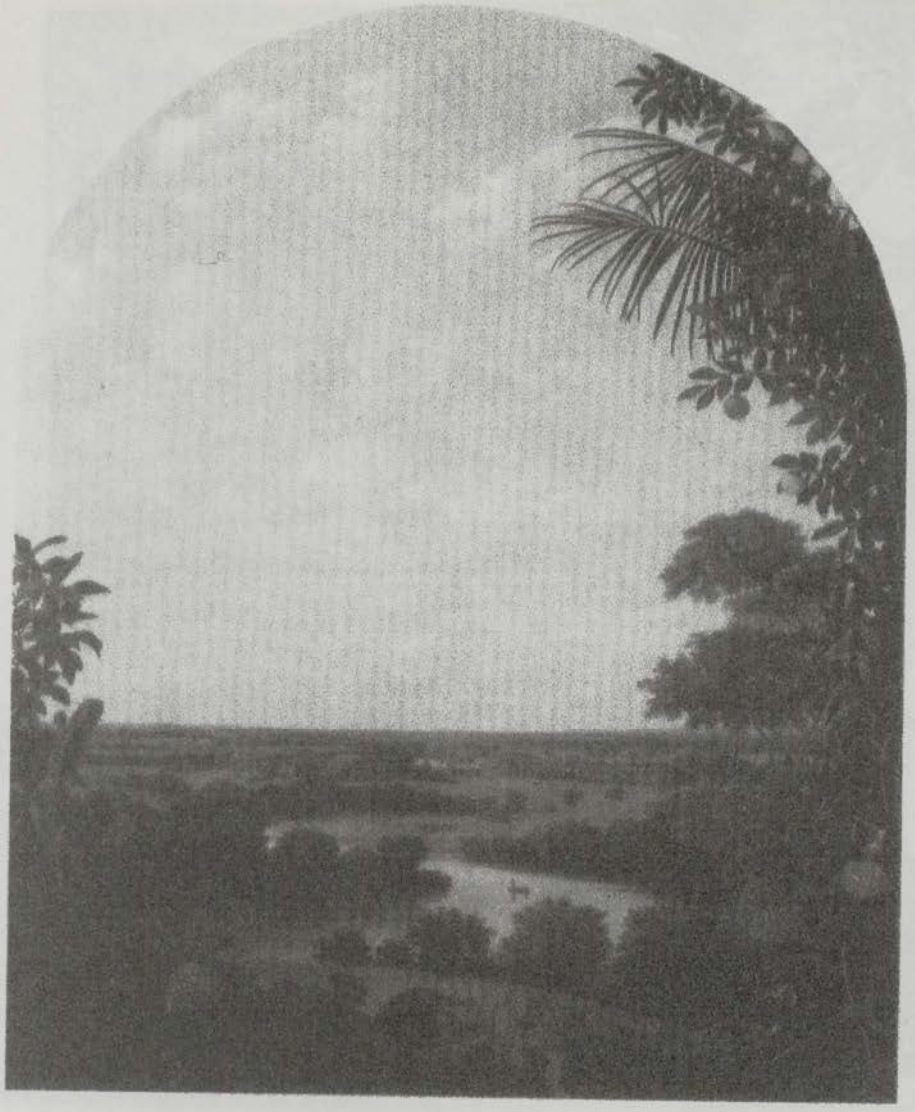


fig. 19

fig. 20

fig. 21

fig. 22

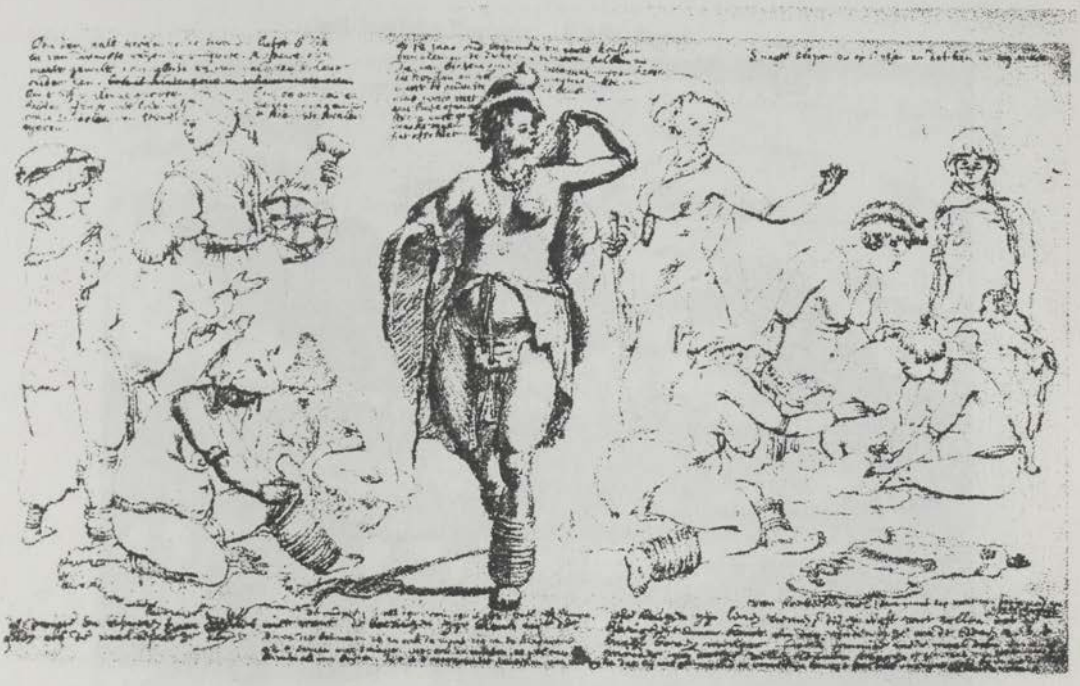
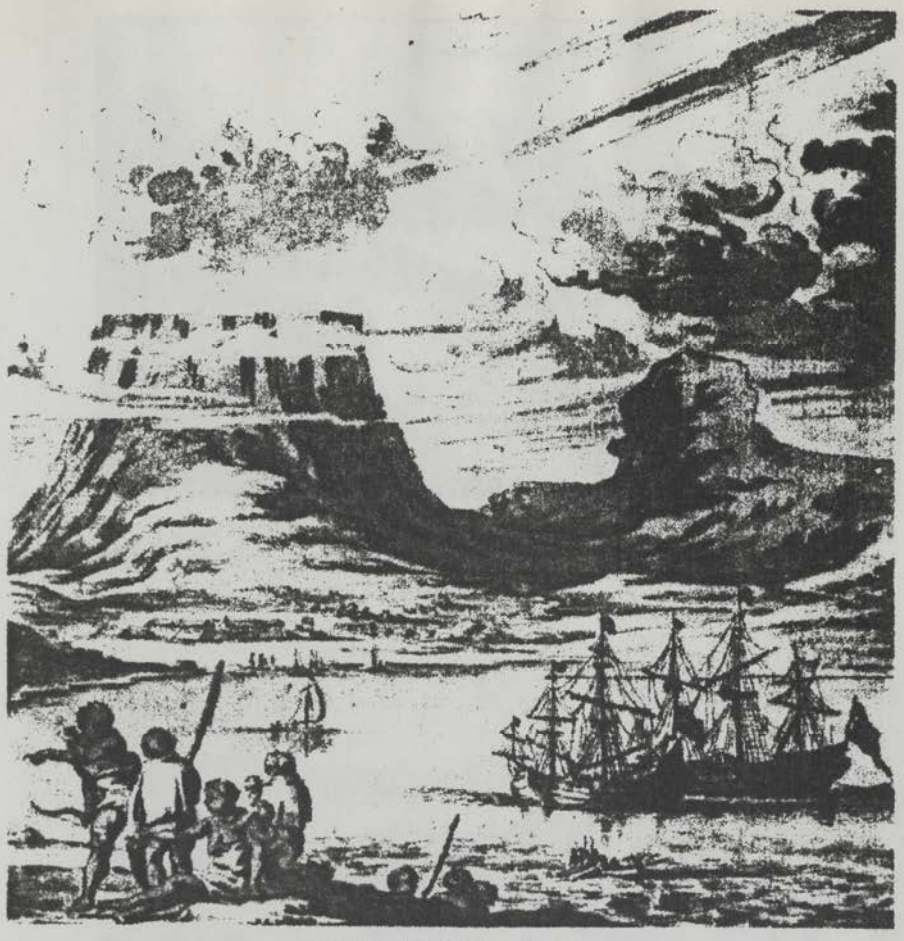


fig. 23



WOUTER SCHOUTEN (1638–1704)

Waterverf
VAN RIEBEECK'S ORIGINAL FORT ON THE SHORES OF TABLE BAY

A. 19
1658

Verwerf
VAN RIEBEECK'S OORSPRONKELIKE FORT VAN TAFELBAAI

fig. 24

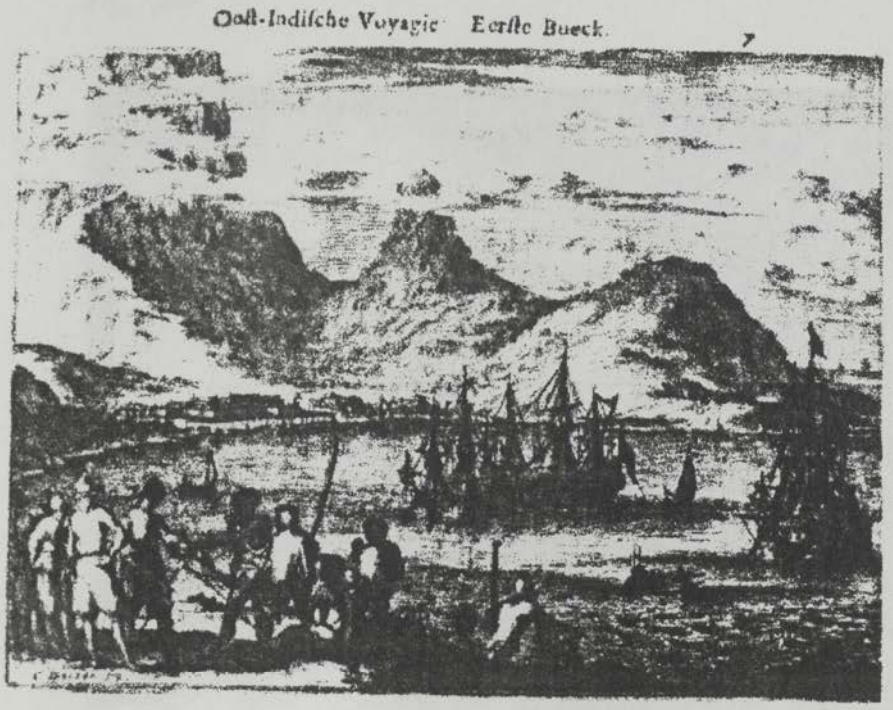


fig. 28

fig. 25

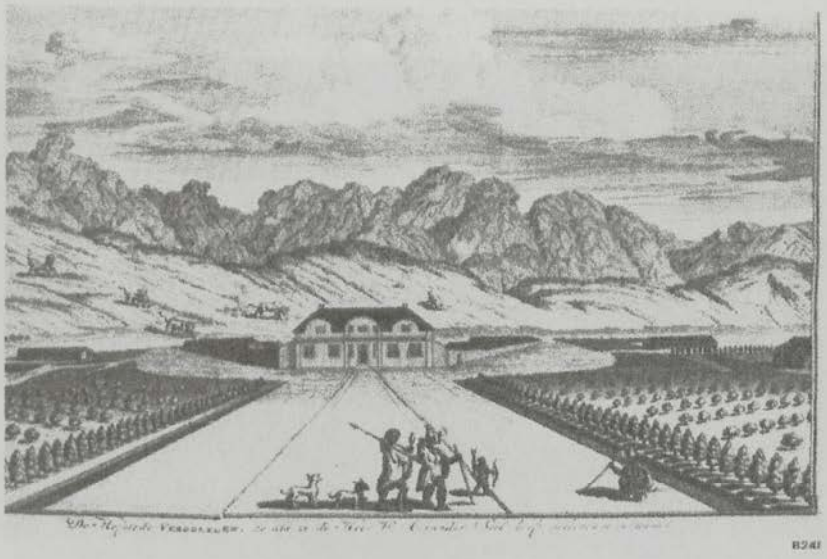


fig. 26

fig. 27

MARCEL BROODTHAERS, DÉPARTMENT DES AIGLES, 1968. VACUUM FORMED PLASTIC AND PAINT. 84 × 120 CM.

fig.29

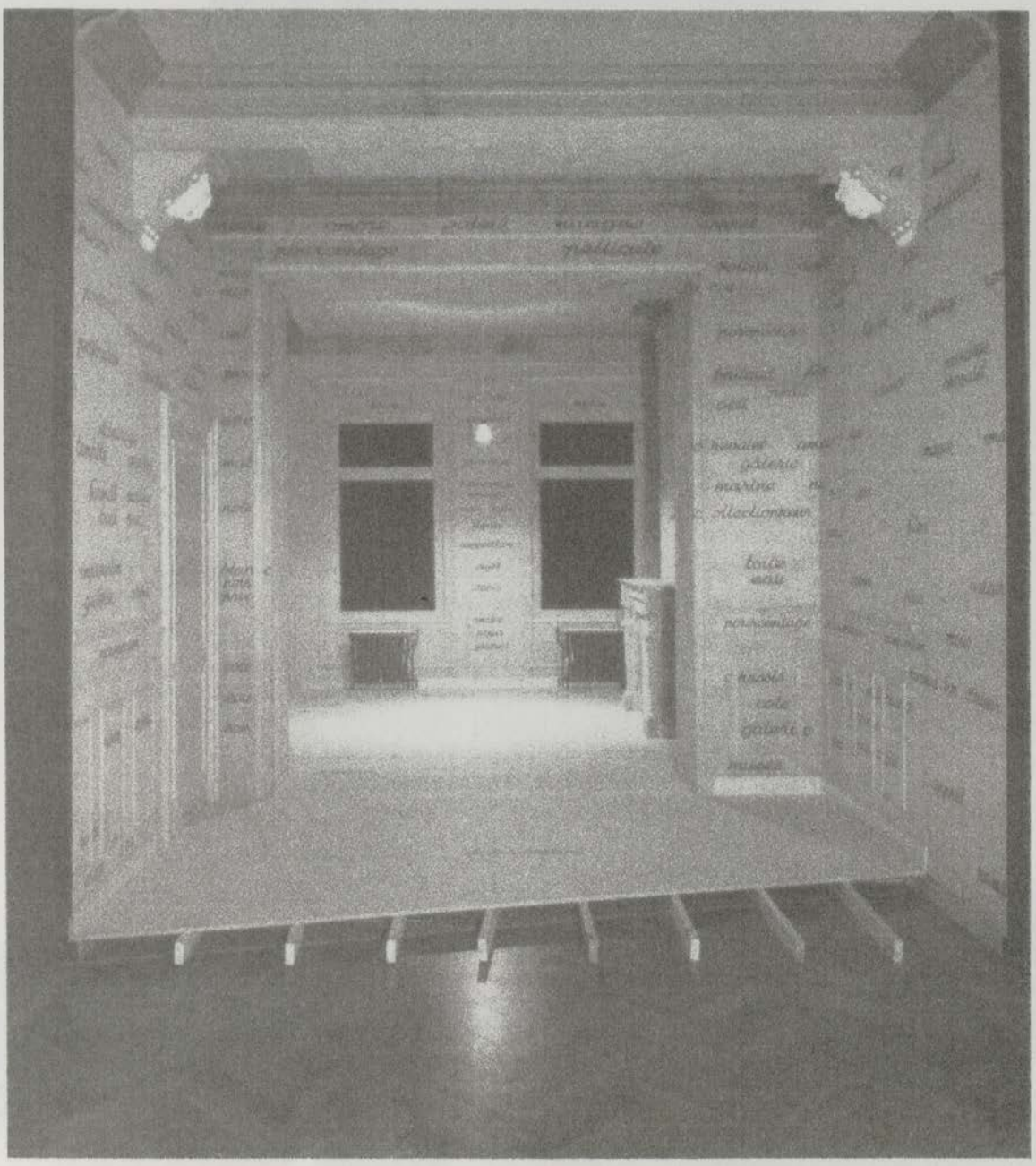


fig. 30

fig. 31

fig. 32

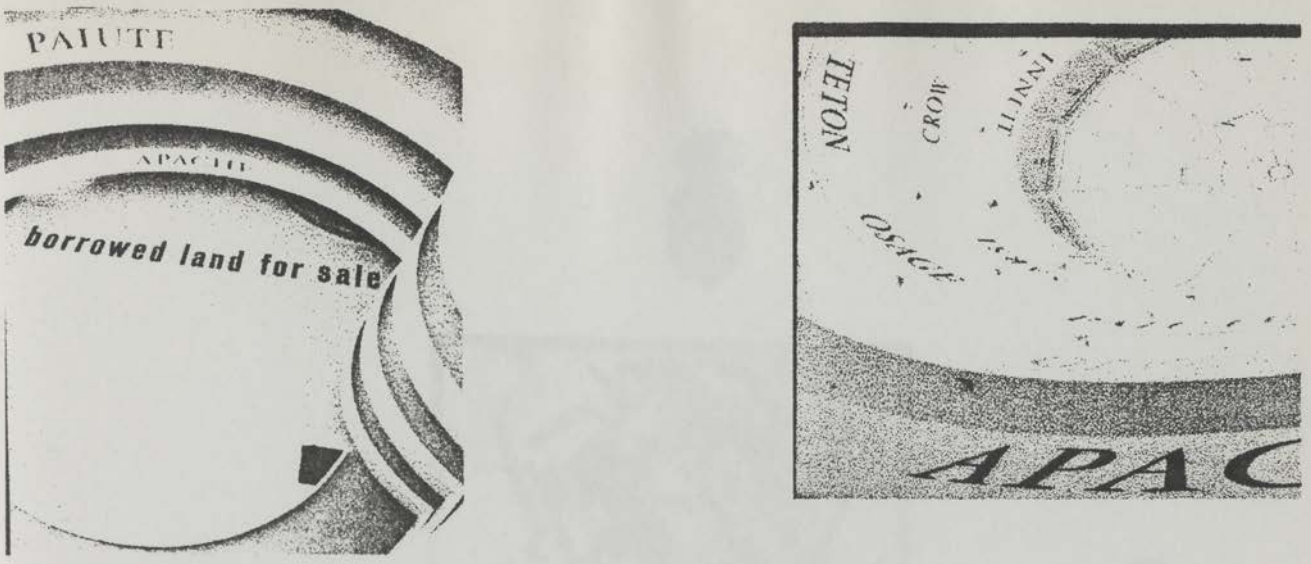


fig. 33

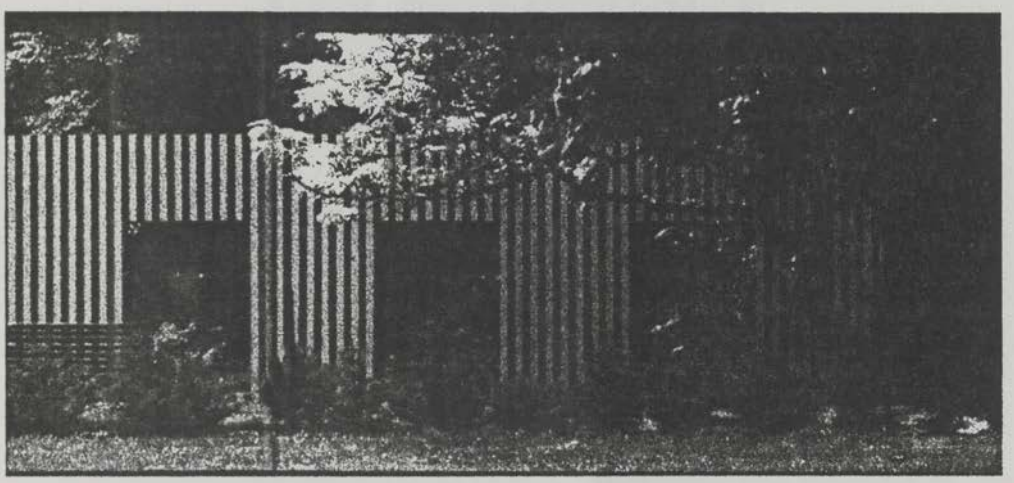


fig. 34

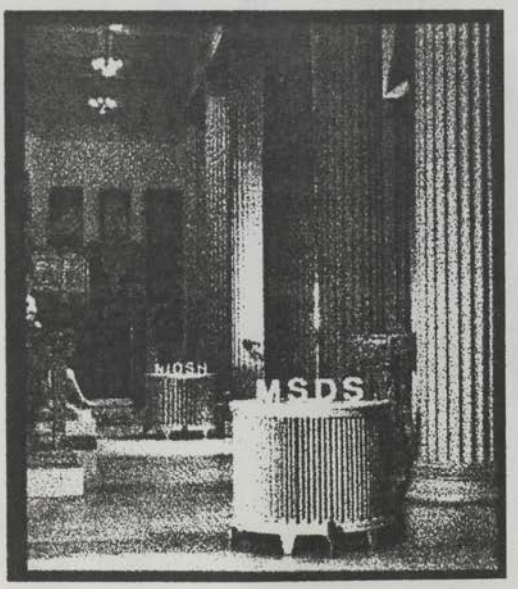


fig. 35

fig. 36

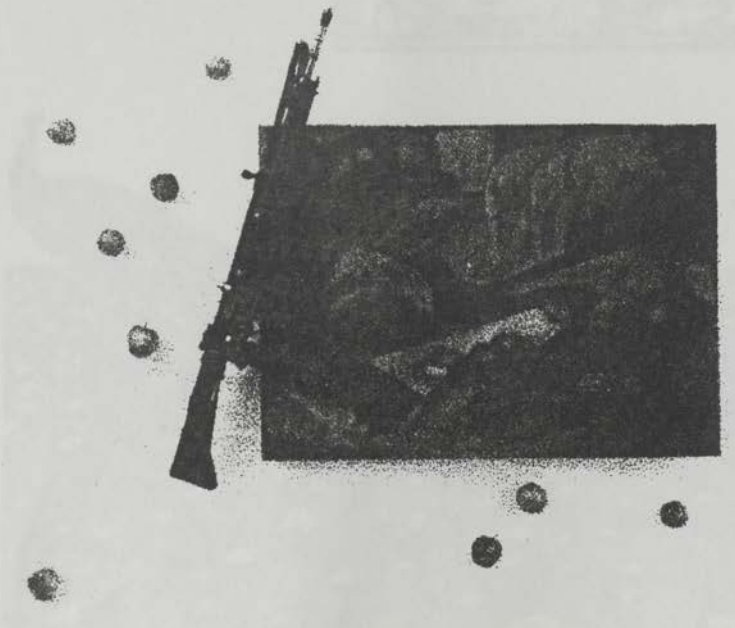


fig. 37

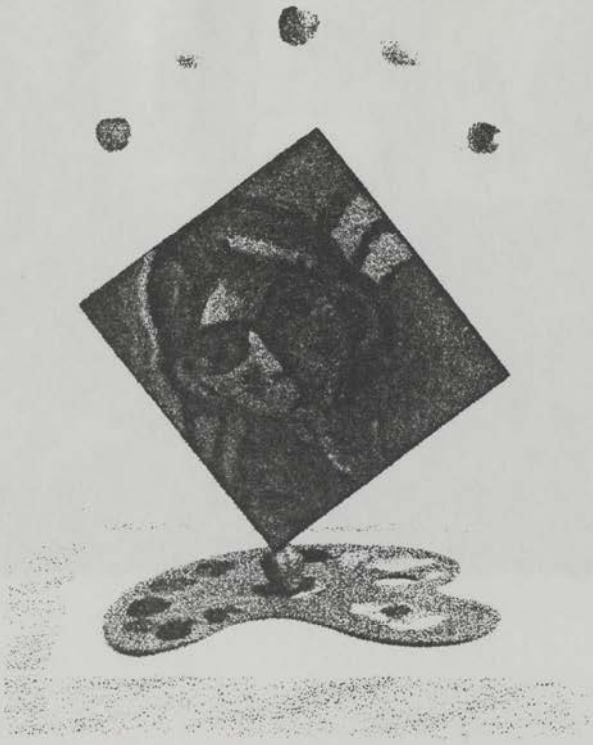


fig. 38

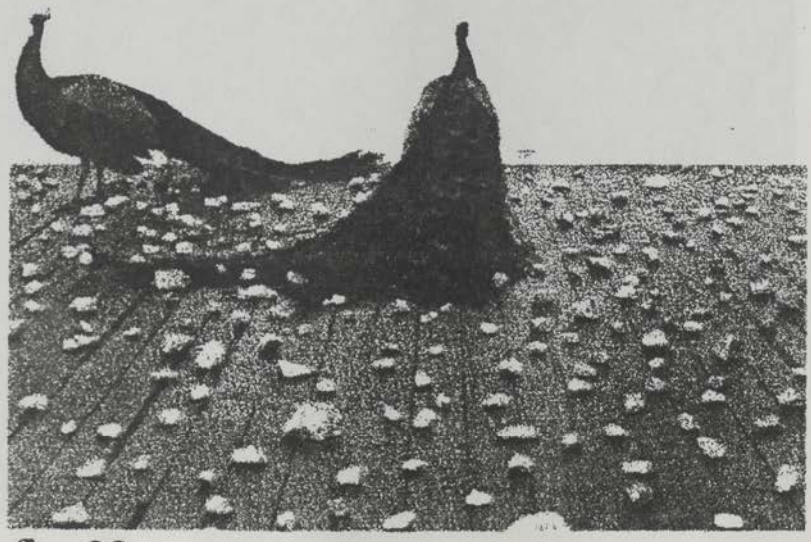


fig. 39

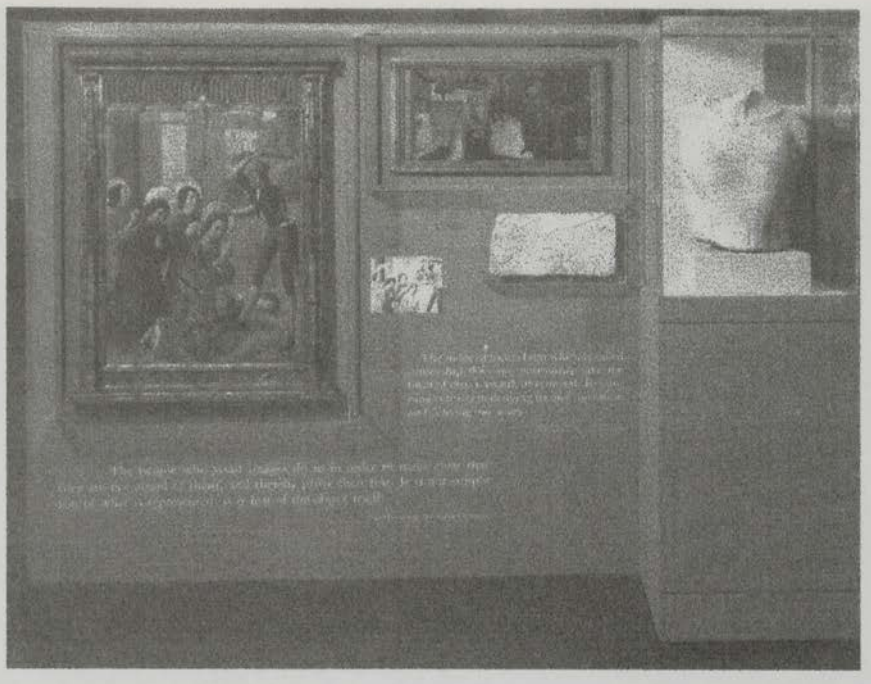


fig. 40

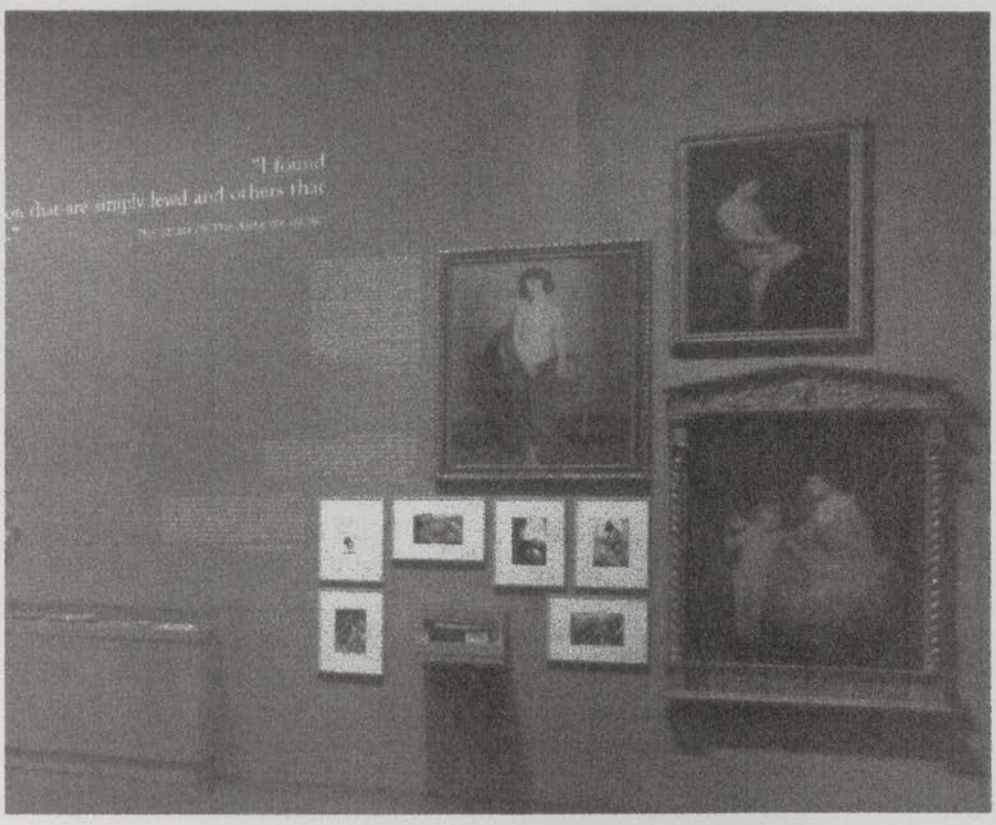


fig. 41

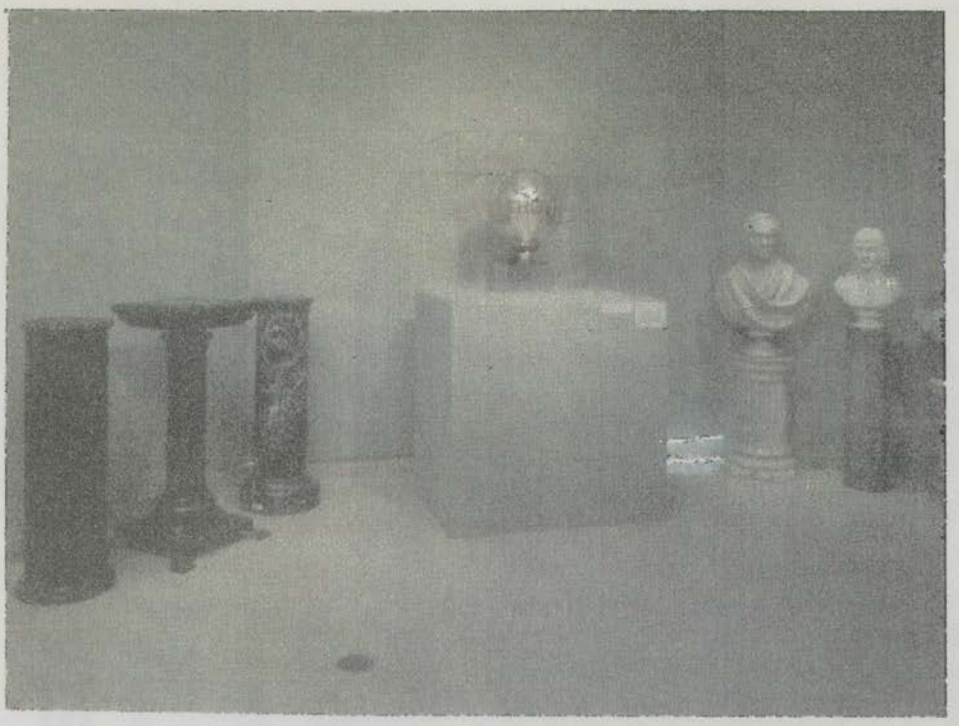


fig. 42

Images of an eye and a dark-skinned nose were projected onto Henry Erbit's torn portrait of an unidentified white man.

fig. 43

(a)

1958-59	3,644,254 units of 200 lbs.
1959-60	2,443,472 units of 200 lbs.
1960-61	1,141,736 units of 200 lbs.
1961-62	755,456 units of 200 lbs.
1962-63	2,677,841 units of 200 lbs.
1963-64	Imports are still taking place but it is estimated that 2,464,400 units of 200 lbs. each will be imported.

(b)

	*Landed cost** (Average per 200 lbs.) c
1958-59	531.26
1959-60	523.03
1960-61	499.50
1961-62	554.60
1962-63	565.20
1963-64	Not yet available.

* The average landed costs include the undermentioned items. As an example the costs for the 1962-3 season are indicated.

	Costs—Average per 200 lbs. c
F.O.B. value	450.5
Net freight	45.3
Customs Duty	52.2
Dock Dues	12.8
Discharging expenses	4.4
Average landed cost	565.2

(2) Yes.

(a) The difference between the f.o.r. selling prices of the Wheat Board for imported wheat and the landed costs thereof, was as follows:

	R
1958-59	1,438,159
1959-60	1,010,798
1960-61	1,044,559
1961-62	328,800
1962-63	346,806
1963-64	Not yet available.

(b) The profits are for the account of the Treasury.

Inportation and and Production of Plain Woven Poplin

IX. Mr. TAUROG asked the Minister of Economic Affairs:

(1) What quantity of plain woven poplin was imported for the clothing and shirt industry during each year from 1961 to 1963 under rebate of customs tariff items 493 (5), 493 (6) and 491 (1) (a) (vi); and

(2) what yardage of this material was spun and woven by South African manufacturers during the same years.

The MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS:

(1) Statistics of imports of plain woven poplin are grouped together with those in respect of other textiles and I regret, therefore, that separate data on imports of plain woven poplin is not available.

(2) The production of this material in the Republic was only started recently and unfortunately no statistics in this connection are as yet available.

Conditions of Acquisition of Fehr Collection

X. Mr. D. E. MITCHELL asked the Minister of Education, Arts and Science:

(1) Whether the purchase of the Fehr Collection by the State was subject to any conditions or restrictions in regard to its (a) future name, (b) exhibition, (c) storage or (d) general control; if so, what conditions or restrictions;

(2) (a) what price for the collection was agreed upon and (b) what amount has been paid to the owner to date;

(3) whether any amount was paid to any other person, company or organization; if so, (a) what amount, (b) what person, company or organization and (c) for what reason;

(4) whether the items purchased constituted the whole collection formerly known as the Fehr Collection; if not, (a) which part of the collection was purchased and (b) what is the description and value of each item;

(5) whether his Department approached Mr. Fehr in the first place; if so, (a) on what date, (b) what was the nature of the approach and (c) what offer was made; if not,

(6) whether an approach was made to the Department; if so, (a) to whom, (b) by whom, (c) what was the nature of the approach and (d) what was the nature of the offer;

(7) whether a valuation was obtained in respect of (a) the whole collection and (b) the individual items; if so, (i) on what date, (ii) from whom, (iii) what were the qualifications of the valuer and (iv) what were the details of the valuation;

(8) whether any independent expert advice was sought; if so, (a) what were the names of the experts, (b) on what date was the advice given and (c) what was the nature of the advice;

(9) whether this advice was given verbally or in writing; and

(10) whether it is intended to exhibit the collection in Cape Town only; if not, (a) where else and (b) when will the collection be exhibited.

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND SCIENCE:

(1) Yes.

(a) The collection is to be known in perpetuity as "The William Fehr Collection".

(b) The collection will continue to be exhibited at the Castle or any other suitable place in Cape Town only.

(c) Any items purchased and which require to be stored will be suitably housed and insured by the Board of Control.

(d) The general control is to remain in the hands of a Board of Control and under the supervision of Dr. William Fehr during his lifetime. The collection should be kept intact as an entity and may therefore not be added to any other collection, which does not at the time of purchase form part of the William Fehr Collection.

(2) (a) R300.000.

(b) The above amount has been paid to the Executors of the Fehr Trust, who were the owners.

(3) No; (a), (b) and (c) Fall away.

(4) The items purchased comprised the whole of the collection at the Castle formerly known as the Fehr Collection.

(a) and (b) Fall away.

(5) Yes. Dr. Fehr was approached in the first instance by the Secretary of my Department of Education, Arts and Science, Dr. J. J. P. Op't Hof.

(a) In May, 1957.

(b) The Secretary of my Department informed Dr. Fehr that it would be a pity if such a collection were to become dispersed and that some means should be considered to preserve the collection for posterity and asked him to ascertain the views of the Trustees.

(c) None.

(6) (a), (b), (c) and (d) Fall away.

(7) (a) Yes.

(b) Only those reflected in Annexure A.

(i) and (ii) On 10 June 1961, from Mr. F. L. Alexander and Dr. F. W. F. Purcell, and on 28 August 1961, from Mr. R. F. Kennedy, M.A.

(iii) The qualification of the valuers were:

Dr. F. W. F. Purcell because he has himself inherited a valuable collection of Cape furniture and china of which he has good knowledge and is a former Vice-President of The South African National Society for the Preservation of Historic Monuments, a member of the Advisory Committee of the Koopmans De Wet Museum, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Michaelis Collection, a member of the Advisory Board of the Museum at Groot Constantia.

Mr. F. L. Alexander who was a lecturer on art and erstwhile dealer in antiques and is at present art critic for the *Burger*.

Mr. R. K. Kennedy, M.A., former Director and Chief Librarian of the Africana Museum and the Public Library of Johannesburg.

(iv) *Dr. Purcell* considered R300.000 a fair valuation for the collection and remarked in his report: "The collection has been made over approximately 30 years, and represents the specialized knowledge and aesthetic discernment of a skilled collector. Such a collection could not be repeated to-day".

Mr. Alexander valued the collection at R150.000 on the basis of what would in his opinion be the commercial value of the individual items, but added: "I fully agree with Dr. Purcell that the collection is in many respects unique . . . and that the number of original oil paintings illustrating the history of South Africa is such that a collection of similar standing could not again be acquired by private or public collections".

Mr. Kennedy's valuation, also based on the sale value, in his estimation, of the individual items was R144.000, but he was of the opinion that the Government would be justified in paying more than the commercial value of the items. We recommended a purchase price of R200.000 but remarked: "How much more the Government should pay de-

pends on how badly the Government desires to retain the collection in the Castle. It is a very fine collection and one of which the Government might well be proud should it acquire it".

It should be pointed out that since the valuations were made a considerable number of valuable items were added which were graciously included by the owners in the collection bought by the Government. The additions include the following important valuable articles:

5 Africana oils.

17 17th century Japanese and 18th century Chinese pieces of china and two large V.O.C. plates.

5 pieces of antique stinkwood, yellowwood and Oak furniture.

1 Bracelet with trinkets, ring and seal for watch chain (all in gold) from Van Reenen family.

1 pair of pewter mugs inscribed: Table Bay Regatta 1878 and 1879.

1 Ships bell 1776.

(8) Yes, as indicated under (7) above.

(9) In writing.

(10) Yes—see reply to (1) (b).

(a) and (b) Fall away.

Annexure A

GUIDE LIST OF PRICES

FEHR COLLECTION.

In determining the price of all objects the historical importance and rarity were the decisive factors. To quote an example: The average price of an oil painting by Baines is much lower than of a painting by Langschmidt since more than 400 paintings by Baines are known but only a few by Langschmidt. An Anonymous of historical significance was valued at a higher price than those signed by the artists but without historical or great aesthetic value.

1. De Smidt R8.000
1. Scott R4.000
1. (best) Langschmidt R2.000 (Average R1.000)
1. (best) Baines R800 (Average R500)
3 Bells (one very small) R2.000
1 Anonymous Table Bay, 18th cent. R800
1 Richard Cosway, miniature, Lady Anne Barnard, R800
1 Anon. Lady Anne Barnard in bath, R600
1 best watercolour (Lady Eyre), C.T. panorama, R800

With such prices, including 9 late 19th century oil pantings at present not exhibited (R1.730) I arrived for the oil and watercolour paintings at a net price of approx. R60,000.

Furniture.

Large cupboard (brass fittings)	R1,800
Large kist	R1.200
Small kist	R800
Best chair (Lutheran church)	R200
Other good chairs, each	R160

Porcelain.

Chinese wine-jug, Mohammedan blue, R400

Large IMARI vase with lid, R400

V.O.C. blue and white IMARI—large plates, each R200; small plates, each R160

Le Sueur stoneware jug, R1.000

Africana.

Combrinck goldsmith scale and weights	R900
Ossewa, Boer war prisoner's work	R600
V.O.C. captain's note book	R300
V.O.C. best piece of glass	R900
Collection of 19th cent. Cape glass	R1.000
Cape tea set, 1835 (tops imported)	R1.800
Sugar bowl	R500

Cape Silver, Cape glass and other items (the contents of two wall cupboards) I valued together at ca. R7.000. Porcelain and copper generally at R12.250. The complete collection as exhibited in the Castle (plus nine oil-paintings) at R100.000 plus 50 per cent good will at R150,000.

(sgd.) F. L. ALEXANDER.

Member of Archives Commission Appointed for Special Interest in the History of S.W.A.

XI. Mr. E. G. MALAN asked the Minister of Education, Arts and Science:

(1) (a) When was the member of the Archives Commission referred to in his statement of 24 March 1964, appointed and (b) what are the qualifications of this person for the appointment;

(2) (a) for how many days since this person's appointment have travelling expenses, subsistence allowance or any other allowances been paid to him, (b) on how many of these days was the subsistence allowance paid at (i) the higher and (ii) the lower rate and (c) what total amount in allowances was paid to him (i) since his appointment and (ii) for 1963.

The MINISTER OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND SCIENCE:

(1) (a) 30 April 1954;

(b) exceptional interest in the history of the territory of South West Africa, as demonstrated by his research in-

to the history of, and the obtention for the Archives of documentation concerning the said territory;

(2) (a) none;

(b) and (c) fall away.

XII. Mr. WOOD—Reply standing over.

Vitamin Tablets Supplied to Coloured Children

XIII. Mr. WOOD asked the Minister of Coloured Affairs:

(1) Whether vitamin tablets are to be supplied to Coloured school children; if so,

(2) whether the tablets are to be supplied to all Coloured school children; if not, (a) to which children and (b) in which provinces;

(3) whether the need for the tablets will be established by medical examinations; if so, (a) what medical examinations and (b) who will conduct the examinations;

(4) (a) which vitamin tablets will be used, (b) what is their strength and (c) who are the manufacturers, and

(5) (a) what is the estimated number of pupils that will require the tablets and (b) what is the estimated cost of (i) the tablets and (ii) their distribution.

The MINISTER OF COLOURED AFFAIRS:

(1) Yes.

(2) No; but to continue an existing scheme tablets will be supplied (a) to needy Coloured school children suffering from malnutrition in (b) the Cape Province. In view of the doubtful benefits derived from such tablets and the proven harmful effects that certain vitamins (notably "A" and "D") may have, this scheme will in time be reconsidered.

(3) Yes; (a) by professional clinical assessment by (b) school nurses, medical inspectors of schools, district surgeons or private medical practitioners.

(4) (a) (i) Ferrous Sulphate, Co. B.P.C.; and (ii) Vitamin "B" Co. plus Vitamin "C".

(b) (i) Dried Ferrous Sulphate grains 3
Copper Sulphate grains 1/25
Maganese Sulphate grains 1/25

(ii)

Thiamine H.C.L.	1	mgm.
Rbioflavine	1	mgm.
Nicotinamide	15	mgm.
Pyridoxine	0.25	mgm.
Calcium Pantothenate	0.25	mgm.
Ascorbic Acid	25	mgm.

(c) Tenders are at present being awaited for the supply of tablets during the winter months of 1964.

(5) (a) Approximately 73,000 pupils.

(b) (i) The cost of the tablets would be approximately R7,000; and (ii) the point of delivery by the successful tenderer would determine the cost of their distribution. An estimate of the cost involved is thus not possible at his stage.

XIV. Mrs. SUZMAN—Reply standing over.

XV. Mrs. SUZMAN—Reply standing over.

Coloured Students Registered in Colleges and Universities

XVI. Mrs. SUZMAN asked the Minister of Coloured Affairs:

(1) How many Coloured students are now registered at (a) the University College of the Western Cape and (b) other South African Universities; and

(2) in what faculties are they registered in each case.

The MINISTER OF COLOURED AFFAIRS:

(1) (a) 389 Coloured students are now registered at the University College of the Western Cape (2) the faculties of Arts, Science, Education and Commerce.

(b) Fourteen Coloured students are registered at the University of the Witwatersrand in (2) the faculties of Arts, Science, Medicine, Law and Dentistry.

Thirty-seven Coloured students are registered at the University of Natal in (2) the faculties of Arts, Education, Social Science and Medicine.

Particulars in respect of the University of Cape Town are as yet not available.

BANTU LAWS AMENDMENT BILL

First Order read: Report stage.—Bantu Laws Amendment Bill.

Amendments in Clauses 8, 12, 15, 25, 31, 61, 77, 78, 79, 91 and 100 put and agreed to.

Question put: That the Bill, as amended, be adopted.

Upon which the House divided:

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