# Moving through the city: Cape Town's Legacy of Slavery and the Performance of Creolised Carnival

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## Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, Thamsanqa Nsele and my mother Phumzile Nsele, my brothers Andile and Lwazi, last but certainly not least my beloved sister Minenhle Nsele. I am very grateful to Prof. Ruth Simbao for her unwavering support and patience. I wish to express gratitude to the Visual and Performing Arts of Africa research team, led by Prof Ruth Simbao for the though-provoking seminars. I am very thankful to the friends that encouraged and cared for me during this challenging but rewarding undertaking.

## Declaration

**I declare that this essay is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by means of complete reference**

## A Note on Terminology

Apartheid era racial classifications are a social construct, and have no objective significance. However, Apartheid was advanced so that there would be equivalence between race and class in South Africa. Explicit racial discrimination affected earnings and income directly and blatantly. For instance, Black people and white people with the same qualification were paid different wages for performing the same job especially in the public sector (Nattress and Seekings 2005: 5). In many ways an individual's income and welfare under Apartheid was dependant on his or her official classification and hence location in a racial hierarchy (Seekings and Nattress 2005:2). Therefore, in contemporary South Africa
[1], it is customary to insist that we move beyond the limitations of race markers, however it is premature, given the ways that these racial categories remain an integral part of political, economic and social analysis (Gqola 2010:16). There are many different versions of racial terminology and a brief explanation of the use of terms in this thesis is in order. Following the conventions of post-apartheid South Africa, "black" "coloured", and "white" will be used to describe the three major racial categories relevant to this thesis (Mc Donald 2008:20). I use a capitalised "Black" to refer to the anti-apartheid definition of Blackness which emerged out of the anti-racist Black Consciousness Movement (Gqola 2010:16). Black is employed as a broad term referring to all people who have been classified as Indian, "coloured" and "black" under apartheid as a whole, in recognition of their common oppression under colonialism and apartheid. I shall use small caps for "black" to refer to black people sometimes referred to as African.

[1] Unsurprisingly, inequality in the distribution of income was extreme in South Africa throughout the Apartheid period. According to Nattress and Seekings (2005: 3) at the end of that era when cross national data was becoming more available. South Africa recorded one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world.

# Abstract

After South Africa entered into democracy in 1994, a mediation period of change was set in motion. It was an invitation for South Africans to imagine and envision themselves anew (Gqola 2010). Slave memory; a neglected past, that was previously silenced came to the fore and is currently in the process of being renegotiated in post-apartheid South Africa. In the light of this, I believe that the study of the Cape Minstrel Carnival which has its social roots in slavery lends itself for an insightful interpretation within an art historical framework. While institutionally the memory of slavery was officially marginalized: comparatively, on the streets of Cape Town, the community preserved it in elusive ways embodied in the procession of Carnival through the city.

This thesis explores the imagery of creolisation, through an analysis of the Cape Minstrel Carnival. Zimitri Erasmus (Erasmus 200:14) defines creolisation as cultural production that happens under the specific conditions of slavery. Before I decode some of the motifs embedded in the imagery of creolisation, in chapter one I provide an in depth analysis; of the contextual conditions of which the practice of carnival originated. My analysis is informed extensively by post-colonial theories on race, identity, and creolisation. The route of the procession of carnival reveals an alternative and clandestine history of the city of Cape Town which I believe deserves focus. In chapter two I discuss its site specificity in relation to key urban sites, such as the District Six Museum, the Slave Lodge Museum and the Bo-Kaap Museum. This thesis explores the use of performance as a corporeal tool to demarcate the city. In the process of this analysis, a repertoire of movement becomes salient in the construction of creolised identities. In chapter three I discuss the motif of the "coon" as the most salient image of creolisation in the parade; I trace its iconographic roots to the performance of blackface minstrelsy that originated from the slave plantations of the United States of America. By unpacking the racist iconography bound up in the initial construction of the "coon", it becomes clear that its derogative meaning was subverted when it was appropriated as a symbol of celebration into the New Year's parades. As a result of its complicated history, some residents deride the parade as perpetuating racial stereotypes, by portraying "coloured"

people as buffoons. Class snobbery has played a big part in the criticism. Therefore the procession of "the coons" or euphemistically the minstrels represents a cultural cringe for some and a festive celebration for others and both these sentiments coexist simultaneously. The Cape Town Minstrel Carnival can be interpreted on multiple shifting levels because it takes on an ambivalent and ambiguous position as far as meaning is concern

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## Introduction

In recent years, there has been an expanding study on the history of South African slavery. However during the process of my research, I found that this contemporary interest has been largely limited to the Social Sciences. Within the field of the Arts, specifically Art History and Visual Culture, research referencing representation of South African slavery has been scant in South Africa in comparison to research on slavery in other countries, for instance, the United States of America. The paucity of representation, specifically in the Fine Art realm, suggests

that South African artists[2] have scarcely explored their pre apartheid pasts, in the process of enriching contemporary art production. In comparison to other mediums of expression, the Cape Minstrel Carnival has been consistent and visible in capturing the memory[3] of slavery in its performance. This thesis addresses the gap in the Visual Art.

The annual procession of the Cape Minstrels is the most popular event that maps the memory of slavery within the city of Cape Town in South Africa. Its popularity dates back to the dark days of slavery, when it was conceived. The Cape Minstrel Carnival has played a significant role, as the most consistent reminder of South Africa's legacy of slavery. Colonialism and Apartheid did not merely emerge in a vacuum; slavery was their precursor. "The narrow focus on these occasions only scratches the surface" in understanding the violent past that still haunts the material and daily lives of contemporary South Africans (Gqola 2011:18). Refocusing historic research on patterns that predate colonialism and apartheid could facilitate dialogue about collective memories that are embedded in cultural practices that are in the present, such as the Cape Minstrel Carnival.

While many people might not make an immediate connection between the contemporary Minstrel Carnival and its distant link to Cape slavery, it is interesting to note that when the minstrels' parade passed historically significant sites such as the Slave Lodge, they often move in a limping manner mimicking to some degree a servile state of being chained together. Although there is a prevailing belief that one cannot be influenced by memories that are not one's own (Gqola 2011:18). I believe the procession of the Cape carnival proves otherwise, it serves as a sterling exemplar of a practice that holds with it memories of the past that permeate and shape the present in subtle but significant ways

[2]Berni Searle is an artist of "coloured" descent and she was born in Cape Town where she currently lives and works. She is one of a few South African artists who subtly reference's a past of slavery in her art pieces. The theme is evident in her *Colour Me* exhibition that took place in 1999. *Colour me* was an installation of photographs of Searle's naked body covered in spices, such as yellow turmeric, red chilli, and black pepper. The spice trade and the slave trade are referenced in her work. Her naked body in the photos re-enacts all the conventions and stereotypes of availability that slavery had designated for bodies such as hers (Baderoon 2009:101).

[3] The meaning of the term "memory" in relation to slavery, in this thesis shifts away from a first person recollection as a witness to slavery. Palmie (2010:367) states that memory has increasingly come to circumscribe forms of commemorative praxis on the part of social collectives whose members have never personally lived in the pasts so "remembered", as in the case of the performers of Carnival.

Notions of forced migration and movement are recurring themes that resonate with the legacy of slavery. In this thesis I discuss the recurring idea of forced movement and the dynamic ways that it lends itself to be associated with servitude. I am concerned with historical movement in the form of the slave trade and movement in the form of urban restructuring during Apartheid. The route of the Cape Minstrel carnival is pertinent, because it is used as a technique of demarcating the city space. The Cape Minstrel carnival becomes a form of corporeal movement that translates into urban mapping in the form of the Cape Carnival procession. Through the analyses of movement, it becomes apparent that the Cape Carnival in its essence reveals a repertoire of movement in the process of constructing Cape identities.

Chapter one thesis focuses on the conditions under which creolized identities were produced and the past that shaped the cultural creativity of this period which led to the emergence of the Carnival (Erasmus 2001:15). I draw on Orlando Patterson (1982) and Arjun Appadurai's (1986) approach on slavery, which shifts away from the traditional idea of slavery as solely the treatment of persons as property or commodities. Apparudai (1982) and Patterson (1986) lean towards a processional perspective on slavery, in which marginality and ambiguity of status are at the crux of the slave's social identities. Like all enduring social processes, exploitative relations such as the historical master and slave relationship became institutionalized and got incorporated into the normative order. According to Gqola (2011:19) the long continuum of institutional violence that "ended"[4] with apartheid started with slavery. Gqola (2011:19) asserts that slave memory is gendered as feminine in contrast to apartheid memory, which has been characterised and critiqued as masculine. Slave memory references women slaves as the forbearers. For example if a slave master fathered the child of his female slave, the child always took on or inherited the status of the mother (Gqola 2011:19).

In her writings, Gqola (2010; 2011) valorises Krotoa-Eva as a prominent female forbearer in South Africa's history of slavery. In the first chapter, I attempt to frame Krotoa as an ambivalent historical figure, imbued with a somewhat carnivalesque disruptive potential. Bakhtin's (1986) philosophy of carnival has proven useful in understanding structures of

[4]It would be naïve to believe that democracy in itself, after the 1994 elections would solve all of South Africa's problems. The legacy of apartheid still lives on, even more so economically, South Africa has one of the widest divides in the world between the rich minority and the poor majority (Sykes 2010). http://www.bbc.uk/ Accessed on 11 November 2011

power relationships. In the new South African dispensation the appropriation of Krotoa-Eva's genealogy by some white Afrikaaners can be interpreted as an expedient move; considering the shift in the political landscape and South Africa's commitment to destabilising and dismantling identities based on racial hierarchies. Krotoa-Eva interpreted within the discourse of the Bakhtin's carnivalesque, renders a multiplicity of semantic meanings that start to emerge. Krotoa's revivalism can be read not only as transgressive to white Apartheid ideology, but as a mockery to their claims of racial purity. Beyond that, one could argue Krotoa is a threshold figure permitting access to the "previously" repressed "other". Bakhtin (1986) glorifies images of reversal, where the poor fool becomes king and condemns the powerful to ruin (Bhaktin 1986). While Krotoa-Eva may not fit in neatly as Bakhtin's protagonist, her historical trajectory certainly shakes up authoritative claims to monolithic identities. Krotoa-Eva was not only banished by the Dutch from their society, she was also banished from history. Now it seems paradoxical and laughable that the Afrikaaners, proud descendants of the Dutch are reviving and exalting Krotoa, a Khoisan woman, as the founding mother of the Afrikaaner nation. Operating like carnival's inversion of power, the revivalism of Krotoa has made room for a diversity of voices and meanings that emerge into significance.

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In Chapter two: *The Carnival's Routed Sense of Place in the City,* I discuss how the Minstrel Carnival procession achieves a mobile sense of place in the city hence the use of the word "routed" instead of " rooted". The Cape Carnival shares an intimate history with the city but a fraught one with the city authorities. I approach this ambivalent dynamic between the city and the Carnival within Michel De Certeau's theoretical framework of tactics and strategies. He says that tactics are used by pedestrians and ordinary users of the city to create a space for themselves in the city. De Certeau (1984:95) claims that strategies are panoptic methods used by the structures of power like the state authorities who politically control the city, by using the process of inclusion and exclusion. I apply this theory to the city of Cape Town which was built over

almost three hundred years of colonial rule. The city has many monuments and buildings that celebrate this colonial heritage, but there are fewer landmarks that acknowledge the contribution made by many thousands of slaves, convicts and free workers who built the city. Instead the latter's descendants were uprooted and removed to the far-flung outskirts of the city during the forced removals of apartheid (Bo-Kaap Museum: 2010).Additionally, I explore District Six's relevance to the Carnival route. The District Six Museum is one of the few landmarks in the city that was built in commemoration for those dispossessed by the forced removals of District Six during apartheid. It is a curious paradox that District Six is remembered “fondly” as a place of hardship (Layne in Soudien and Meyer 1998:04). I unpack the romantic undertones of remembering life fondly under apartheid, by employing Svetlana Boym's (2001) philosophy of restorative nostalgia to critique the museums fundamental commitment of recalling “the spirit” of District Six through memory.

Chapter three traces the iconography of creolisation in the performance of Carnival. I concentrate on the controversial archetype of the “coon”, because it can be interpreted on multiple semantic levels. The “coon” motif is bound up in meanings of ambivalence and ambiguity, similar to the way that the Cape Carnival is a “cultural cringe” for some and a festive celebration for others. The “coon” archetype is rooted in the performance of blackface minstrelsy which has social origins in slavery in America. Eric Lott (1992) claims that it in fact functioned as a replication of the slave-master relationship, a relationship that on a deeper level revealed and concealed the double-edged sword of negrophilia and negrophobia. It permitted the transgression of hierarchical boundaries, through the conflation of the self and the other. This is illustrated in the way that blackface minstrelsy operated as a safety valve, a taboo breaking release of tensions hinged on racial and class hierarchy (Cockerell 1997: 160). Blackface minstrelsy permitted the freedom of release from the restraints of everyday life; therefore it is not surprising that it was appropriated into celebrations of emancipation and the New Year’s festivals by the descendants of slaves in Cape Town.

In recent years, some contemporary artists and curators have made noteworthy references to the Cape Carnival. The most recent and salient of these references is *A walk into the night,* curated by Claire Tancons that I attended in 2009. *A walk into the night* was a processional piece that took

place at company gardens; it was performed in 2009 as part of the Cape 09 Biennale. In this chapter I discuss how the procession of *A walk into the night* saw the destructive potential of carnival realised, when the art work made for the procession was destroyed by the children who participated in the event. Claire Tancons has written a various papers that grapple with the idea of carnival performance as a displaced practice within formal institutional spaces, especially the art world. Her papers that I refer to in my analysis are *The Greatest Free Show on Earth: Carnival from Trinidad to Brazil, Cape Town to New Orleans* (2008) and *Carnival and The Artistic Contract: Spring in Gwangju* (2008). In her texts, Tancons calls for the institutional recognition of the creole carnival as field of artistic creation. Tancons poses critical and pertinent questions, especially in the context of South Africa, where mainstream art institutions' have a history of riding the coattails of European academism, in the form of traditional mediums such as painting, sculpture and drawing. The performance of carnival has challenged the representation of art, by being staged in a "non-art" space, the streets, which are a public space that reach a far wider and more diverse audience than the white cube of a gallery space. There is an interesting paradox bound up in the performance of carnival on the streets of Cape Town. In as much it may reference a painful history of forced removals and displacement under Apartheid, the Cape Carnival has a heightened sense of place. This sense of place is manifest in the carnival route and its attempt to subjectively map the city. Even if temporarily, its performers and audience reclaim the city space that they once occupied in the past.

Anthea Moys's performance piece also evoked the idea of displacement and commodification in a poignant way. It was titled *Deurmekaar*[5] and she performed it in collaboration with the District Six Hanover Minstrels. It was part of the *Power Play* exhibition at Goodman Gallery in Cape Town. This performance engaged directly with the space at the rooftop of the Goodman Gallery, and as such it addressed the power politics of space within the city. Within the framework of the influx of the art galleries such as the Goodman to the historically working class neighbourhood of Woodstock, this performance piece understatedly alluded to contemporary forms of urban displacement, such as gentrification. The notion of place plays a critical role in any performance art, because the performance has to literally 'take place' and be located somewhere. The performance sites of the Cape Minstrel Carnival, *A walk into the night* and *Deurmekaar* are

[5]Deurmekaar is an Afrikaans word that means bewildered (www.interpret.co.za) accessed on the 10th December 2011.

marked by their own histories of movement. The idea of movement and process are consistent themes in this thesis; from the forced migrations of slavery, to cultural appropriation of American blackface minstrelsy. Notions of movement and process are manifested in this thesis not only historically but also visually in their distinctive corporality.

## CHAPTER ONE: SLAVERY IN SOUTH AFRICA, A PAST LESS TRAVELLED

*Introduction*

In this chapter, I provide a brief historical context[6] of early Cape Town under the condition of slavery. The Dutch East India Company had a powerful impact in establishing the Cape as a settlement, and I examine the hierarchical structure of this society in order to depict some of the ways that hierarchy has come to be reflected and transgressed in the cultural production of the Cape Minstrel Carnival. South Africa and the United States of America share a similar

[6] Although I position the beginning of this thesis in the early the Cape Colony, it is not my intention to perpetuate the pervasive colonial myth of 1652 as a founding moment in South African history, this colonial myth is based on the premise that South Africa was an unpopulated land belonging to no one and that both Blacks and whites are immigrants with an equal claim to the land (Tsotsi 2000:15).

legacy of slavery, in this chapter I briefly discuss a few similarities and differences between Cape slavery and Trans-Atlantic slavery[7]. It is imperative to examine some of the social dynamics of slavery in order to understand how the act of blackface minstrelsy was produced, and the conditions under which it was appropriated into the Cape Carnival in South Africa.

I discuss Orlando Patterson's (1982) philosophy of slavery as an enduring social process, particularly in the case of the slave-master relationship model which was sometimes institutionalised and legitimated as a normative order. Using Patterson (1982) as a source, I further analyse how servitude causes the devastating condition of natal alienation and social death on the part of the slave. Additionally I discuss the powerful position of mastership and the ways it enables myth-making, which came in the form of character stereotypes that were constructed to justify the position of the slave as an object. I look into how the myth of white universality consolidated the colonial stereotype of the "savage" other as a category of comparison in the Cape colony, ranking modern Europeans superior to the indigenous Khoisan. The idea of identities based on racial hierarchy leads to the story of Krotoa/ Eva, the first Khoisan woman to marry into Dutch society (Gqola 2011) (Wells 1998) and (Coetzee 1997). Her legacy is bound up with the transgressive potential of the carnivalesque, especially when one considers how her story was suppressed during colonialism/ apartheid only to be exalted in non-racial South Africa assisting in the "rebirth" and re-articulation of Afrikaans identities (Gqola 2011).Adam Smith (in Joseph Roach 1996:06) claimed that

> The discovery of America and of the passage to the East Indies by the Cape of Good Hope are the two greatest and most important events recorded in the history of mankind.

For Smith "The Discovery of America"[8] was indeed a watershed event in human history. It preceded the emergence of the Trans-Atlantic slave system, the largest forced transportation

[7]While there is an abundance of American scholarship on slavery that has informed my research. One cannot state the same about the availability and diversity of South African scholarship on slavery. Nigel Worden, Robert Ross, R E Van Der Ross, Robert Shell, John Edwin Mason and Pumla Dineo Gqola are amongst a handful of authors that have published academic books on Cape slavery in South Africa.

[8]To the Native Americans, the European concept of 'the discovery of the New World' is both ludicrous and insulting, the Native Americans occupied North America for thousands of years prior to European invasion (Gares 1991:01).

of human beings from one part of the globe to the other, throughout the history of humankind[9] (Gratus 1973:11). Britain, Portugal and Spain were the biggest traders of African slaves. They sourced the slaves from the west coast of Africa. African men and women were transported across the Atlantic Ocean to North American and South American plantations where those that survived the journey were exploited as a slave labour force.

Africans were not only brutally extracted from their physical environment and from their families, but they were also psychologically dispossesed in the process of chattel enslavement. This means that their languages were stilled, along with their customs and values. This form of transformation was enforced with violence as a tool of manipulation; through beatings, rape, torture and death. Chattel enslavement is a mode of production in which slaves constitute the main work force within a society (Tsotsi 2000:29). The trading of black African slaves started from the early 16th century to the 19th century, which means this period of brute violence lasted for approximately more than 250 hundred years (Northup 2002).There is a tendency to view slavery at the Cape[10] as relatively mild in comparison to the import-oriented plantations of the North America and the Caribbean. According to Worden (1985:02), some South African scholars believe that the Cape slaves were not intensively exploited as a labour force in comparison to other slave societies, this is not so. The implication here is that slavery in South Africa was not as brutal or as rigid as in America. These opinions serve ideological purposes rather than historical accuracy (Worden 1985:02). Slavery in South Africa was by no means "mild" as prevailing orthodoxy suggests. Cape slavery was just as brute and vigorous. The levels of profitability obtained by some slave owners from their slaves in the Cape, was the same as those calculated in the plantation systems of America (Worden1985:4).

[9]The Atlantic slave trade, which formed the nucleus of the European slave system lasted for 250 years and it is estimated that the total figure of slaves transported was as high as forty million (Gratus 1973:11).

[10]John Edwin Mason (2011) highlights some of the differences and similarities between the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the Cape slavery. He says that South Africa and the American South are cousins: instantly recognisable as members of the same family, but with distinctively different personalities. Both South Africa and the USA owe much of their early economic development to slavery. In both complex systems, racial domination shaped society for generations before and after the emancipation of the slaves. Furthermore, in both the interracial struggle against racial domination gave rise to some of the most important people and events in their histories <http://www.virginia.edu/history/user/38> (accessed on 22 October 2011)

Smith (in Roach 1996:06) suggests that the Cape of Good Hope, owes its "greatness" and "importance" to its geographical position because it is *en-route* to the East Indies[11]: an archipelago island referred today as Indonesia. Inevitably, Cape Town became the first port used by European merchants[12] in South Africa (Worden 1985; Van Der Ross 2005; Shell 1983; Mason 2003 and (Reddy 2000). European merchants had not known the Cape to possess any of the raw materials that they were pursuing; nevertheless it was conveniently situated halfway along the sea route to the East, and this situated in an ideal position for a refreshment station (van der Ross 2005:19).

The establishment of the Cape as a refreshment station was suggested to the Dutch East India Company by two survivors of the *Haarlem* ship wreck Janssen and Proot in 1648, after their ship had been wrecked on the shores of the Cape for a whole year (*ibid*).The castaways reported that the Cape had the potential to be an ideal refreshment station for sailors and merchants. Jan Van Riebeeck a maritime criminal[13], also a former servant of the DEIC,[14] was on the ship that took the castaways back to the Netherlands (Van Der Ross 2005:19). Jan Van Riebeeck had intensive talks with the shipwreck survivors and the DEIC shareholders which resulted in the conception of the idea of launching the Cape as a refreshment station and

[11] Subsequently it was from the East Indies and Africa that South Africa received its slave population

[12] Merchant ships on the voyage between Europe and the East, would dock in Cape for a few weeks to give their crew a rest and to take on fresh food and other provisions (Van Der Ross 2005). The trade was in two directions; merchandises were taken from Europe to be sold in the East on the forward journey and on the return journey goods were brought back to Europe to be sold for more than the goods that were taken out and in this way profit was maintained (ibid).The goods that were carried to the East by the Dutch consisted of gold, silver, lead and mercury. Textiles such as linen and woollen material were also exported. The Dutch had already established trading posts in the East Indies by 1602, before they arrived at the Cape (Lambert 2011). When they needed to repair their ships and maintain their buildings in the East, they would bring back materials such as nails, masts, sails, rope, compasses and navigation instruments. Writing materials, building materials and domestic utensils were also transported for the use of the Dutch colonists and their families who had already settled there in the East Indies (Van Der Ross 2005:19). Most of what was imported from the East were products which people from the Netherlands and greater Europe wanted but could not obtain and many of the products had to do with preserving and flavouring food since there were no refrigerators at the time. On the return journey, the Dutch vessels were filled with aromatic peppers, spices, tea, cinnamon, cloves and silks (Van der Ross 2005:17).

[13]Jan Van Riebeeck had been sentenced in Batavia (Jakarta) for carrying on private trading (van der Ross 2005:19)

[14]The Dutch East India Company was a mercantilist slave trading company that created slave societies in the Cape, Mauritius, South West Indian Ocean, whilst playing a key role in the intensification of slavery in Batavia (Jakarta) and elsewhere in the East Indies (Worden 2001:52).

trading post. Despite his dismissal from the Company's service and his apparent criminal record, Jan Van Riebeeck was reinstated into the company's service and promoted to the rank of Merchant and Commander. He was put in charge of the expedition to establish a refreshment station in what was later to become the Cape Colony.

## 1.1 A BRIEF BACKGROUND ON THE DUTCH EAST INDIA COMPANY

By the time that Jan Van Riebeeck had established a settlement in the Cape in 1652, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade was about 33 years old[15], thus in the western world slavery was already regarded as an effective way of obtaining labour. The Dutch East India Company, the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) was a Dutch Commercial Company that had a history of slave trading in the East Indies (Van Der Ross 2005, Worden 2005 and Ross 1983). The Cape was merely integrated into a wider structure of the Dutch East India Company's mercantilist empire. Up until 1732 the Cape was governed by both the Heeren XVII[16] in the Netherlands and the Council of Dutch Batavia (present-day Indonesia). The sole purpose for the establishment of settlements or colonies by the VOC was to increase the profit of the company. Worden (1998:70) emphasizes that the welfare of the people who lived at the Cape was less than important and he adds that the authority of the VOC was embodied in the institutions such as the Castle of Good[17] Hope, the courts and the church. Therefore, having a cheap and subservient labour force fitted neatly into the plans of the VOC. All the rules and laws at the Cape and all the decisions taken by the government were solely focused at increasing the profit of the VOC. The establishment and organization of the VOC in the Cape colony followed the patterns of the Dutch East Indies. In 1653, a year after Jan van Riebeeck started the settlement, the first slave that was brought into the Cape was Abraham of Batavia, this was not his real name but it was common for slaves to be indiscriminately renamed.

[15]The slave trade officially began in 1619 (Gratus 1973).

[16]The Dutch name for the Dutch East India Company is Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC). It was controlled by the Heeren XVII or Lords Seventeen who represented the various shareholders in the Company (Worden 2005 Van Der Ross 2005).

[17]The Castle of Good Hope is a pentagon shaped fortress situated adjacent to where the present day Grand Parade is. It is the oldest colonial structure in South Africa built in the seventeenth century (Coetzer 2009).

Figure.1 is one of the earliest illustrations depicting slavery in the Cape, and portrays an overdressed Dutch man is overseeing a slave with a hoe. The exact date that this image was made is unknown, however Nigel Worden (1999) claims it was produced during the early eighteenth century. It was during the year 1653 that “white” colonial South Africa inaugurated its career as a slave society.

## 1.2. THE NOTION OF SLAVERY AS A PROCESS

Many historians fall into the trap of presenting slavery as a static institution. As Rose writes (in Shell 1994:30):

> Almost never has the institution of slavery been treated as an evolving institution, very different in the seventeenth century to what it became in the eighteenth, and eventually in the nineteenth. In fact most studies of slavery are static in their conception …Somehow the idea of the passage of time and the sense of change must be inserted into this history, if it is to become a meaningful history

Slavery was not a static entity, but a complex interactional process of patterned behaviour fraught with tension and contradiction. Like all enduring social processes, such relations like the slave relationship became institutionalized and got incorporated into a normative order. Those who exercise power, if they are able to transform it into a right, a norm, as a standard given order, they must first control or be in a position to manipulate appropriate symbolic instruments such as institutions, in their favour (Manning 1996:14). The trade in slaves formed a painful yet critical element in the construction and progression of early modern life (Manning 1996:15). Manning (1996:18) asserts that

> The study of the slave trade is more than a footnote to world history, more than a side step through the seamy side of our common past: it gives insight into the fundamental complexity of modern world history, and draws attention to the pain and loss that seem necessarily to have accompanied the triumphs of globalization.

In his essay titled *The Social Life of Things, Commodities in a Cultural Perspective,* Arjun Apparudai (1986:65) propagates a shift away from the all or none, fixed view of slavery and he leans towards a processional perspective, in which marginality and ambiguity of status are at the core of the slave’s social identities. From this perspective slavery is seen not as a fixed

and unitary status, but as a process of social transformation that involves a succession of phases and changes in status, some of which merge with other statuses. Slavery begins with the capture or sale when the individual is stripped of his or her previous social identity, dissocialised and becomes a “non-person”, indeed an object and an actual potential commodity – the slave is acquired by a person or group and is reinserted into the host group (Apparudai1986:65). Within this group s/he is resocialised or “rehumanized” by being given a new social identity, it is not quite a rehumanization *per se*, seeing as slaves were fundamentally dehumanized[18] individuals. From this perspective one can deduce the processional nature in imperial relations. Hence in this thesis the concept of slavery as a process of transformation, assimilation, change, alienation, ambiguity and marginality is a central theme that underpins my discussion of creolisation and the Cape Minstrel Carnival.

Slavery must be understood as a process involving several transitional phases. Patterson (1982:1) states that if we are to understand the intricacies of slavery and what makes it distinctive from other processes, we must begin by unravelling the anatomy of its power dynamics. Slavery is an extreme form of domination from the limits of “absolute” power from the view point of the master, and that of absolute powerlessness, from the viewpoint of the slave. Patterson (*ibid*) breaks down this power dynamic into three facets; the first component involves the threat of violence in the control of one person by another, the role of brute force is crucial and cannot be undermined in the creation and maintaining of domination and social control. The second is a psychological facet of influence, the capacity to persuade another to change the way he or she perceives his or her interests and his or her circumstances and the third involves turning obedience into duty. These facets in totality ensure a continual mastership.

In his or her powerlessness the slave becomes an extension of the master’s power; “without the master the slave does not exist” and ironically vice versa (Patterson 1982:4). Total power taken to its extreme contradicts itself by its very existence, for total domination can be a form

[18]Frederick Douglass, a former slave in the USA, expresses the depth of this dehumanizing character of slavery when in his autobiography he states that “ By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses know of theirs, and it is the wish of most masters to keep their slaves thus ignorant” (Douglass 1986:47).

of extreme dependence on the object of one's power, and total powerlessness can be a secret path to control the subject that attempt to exercise such power. Even though this contradiction is usually only the potential, the possibility of its realization influences the normal course of the relation in very profound ways. An exploration of this unique dimension of the dynamics of power in the master-slave relationship shall be discussed later in this thesis when I focus on the construction of black face minstrelsy in Chapter Three. The most distinctive feature of the slave's powerlessness was the fact that slavery originated as a substitute for death, or the threat and prospect of death (Manning 1996).

Archetypically, in many ancient civilizations, slavery was a substitute for death, particularly after a war. Rather than get killed, the defeated would surrender themselves to the victors as captives or fight till death. From the cradle to the grave the condition of being enslaved came with lingering prospect of death (*ibid*). In Patterson's (1982:4) words "The execution was suspended as long as the slave submitted to his powerlessness. The master was essentially a ransomer". Because the slave had no socially recognized existence outside of his master, he became a social "non-person", which brings us to Patterson's second constituent element of slave relations. According to Patterson (1982:05) the second component of slave relations is the slave's natal alienation, which means the slave is denied all rights or claims to birth him or she ceases to belong in his/her own right to any legitimate social order. The slave has no claims on, nor obligations to her living blood relatives. Nor does s/he have claims on her ancestry. Consequently s/he is not only emotionally isolated from kin but also from her cultural traditions and any rights or obligations they might support. That is why slaves, including young children[19], were taken away from their families when sold into slavery and had to face to hardships of slavery on their own.

Many slaves were given new names every time they were resold and this renaming was viewed as essential to the process and practise of slavery because it represented the change of status for the slave. It signified a death of his or her old self and at the same time a rebirth and

[19]Douglass concurs that it was a common custom to part children from their mothers at an early age. Frequently, before the child had reached its twelfth month, its mother was taken from it and hired out on some farm a considerable distance off, and the child was placed under the care of an old woman, too old for field labour. "For what this separation is done I do not know unless it is to hinder the development of the child's affection toward its mother, and to blunt and destroy it natural affection of the mother for the child, this is the inevitable result" (Douglass 1986:48).

renewal of identity within the community that provides him with a new name and status. It was important for slaves to form bonds through families. It was one way of regaining their humanity and self-respect. Families provided a support structure to help people cope with the violence[20] and hardship they experienced as slaves. On the contrary, slave parents suffered even more as they had to witness their children being abused by their owners, and vice versa their children had to witness their parents being abused by their masters. Furthermore, life partners could be separated at the whim of the owner. The children of slaves could also be sold separately from their parents. Many disputes between slaves and slave owners started when the owner disregarded a slave parent's authority over his or her children. Many slave couples belonged to different owners. They were therefore dependent on the goodwill of their owners to see each other (Mason 2003).

This aspect of being cut off and estranged from your family is called the process of natal alienation (Patterson 1982:05). This is a critical cultural aspect of most slave relations. This cultural component is entirely dependent and legitimated by the full might of authority, in this case the slave master's authority and his control over symbolic institutional instruments. Patterson (1982:05) explains more elaborately how the process of natal alienation is deployed to strip the slave from his or her family, ethnic and cultural affiliations:

> The slave is a socially dead person. Alienated from all the 'rights' or claims of birth, he ceased to belong in his own right to a legitimate social order. Not only was the slave denied all claims on, and obligations to, his parents and living blood relations, but by extension, all such claims and obligations on his more remote ancestors and on his descendants. He was truly a genealogical isolate. Formally isolated in his social relations with those who lived, he was culturally isolated from the social heritage of his ancestors. He had a past, to be sure. But a past is not a heritage.

[20]For the hundreds of years that slavery remained officially intact, violence was used as the efficient method of maintaining that order. Frederick Douglass (1986:51) describes a bloody scene at the plantation, when his aunt got whipped by an overseer, Mr Plummer "The louder she screamed the harder he whipped; and where the blood ran the fastest, there he whipped the longest. He would whip to make her scream, and whip her to make her hush; and not until overcome by fatigue, would he cease to swing the blood clotted cow skin".

From the lingering threat of physical death to social death, in his article *Necropolitics*, Achille Mbembe (2003:11) states that the ultimate expression of sovereignty is having the power to dictate who may live and who may die. Within the context of the plantation system, the state of death and life were married in the sense that "slave life, in many ways, is a form of death-in-life" as Susan Buck-Morss (in Mbembe 2003:21) suggests. Mbembe (2003:12) explains that "The slave condition produces a contradiction between freedom of property and freedom of person. An unequal relationship is established along with the inequality of the power over life. This power over the life of another takes the form of commerce: a person's humanity is dissolved to the point that it becomes possible to say that the slave's life is possessed by the master because the slave's life is like a "thing," an object possessed by another person; the slave existence appears as a perfect figure of a shadow.

It becomes evident that the notion of death manifests itself in multi-dimensional ways in the life of a slave[21]. Patterson (1982:05) explains that slaves differed from other human beings in the fact that they were prohibited from integrating the experience of their ancestors into their lives. They could not inherit any memory from their ancestors nor were they allowed to anchor themselves into the living present by consciously contributing into the communities' repository of memory (Patterson1982:05). Unlike other people, doing so meant perpetually struggling with penetrating the "iron curtain of the master" for example his master's community, his education, his laws, his religion, and his policemen (*ibid*). The critical point here is that even though they weren't prohibited from procreation, their biological and social relations were not recognized as legitimate or binding. The formal refusal to recognize the social relations of the slave and their institutional alienation had grave emotional and social implications, Patterson (1982:05) further explains in further detail that In all slave holding societies couples could be forcibly separated, the "wives" of slaves could be forced to submit sexually to their masters. Slaves had no custodial claims and powers over their children, and children inherited no custodial claims or obligations to their parents. The master had the absolute power to remove the slave from the community which s/he had grown up.

[21]Mbembe (2003:21) states that the slave is in a "phantom like world of horrors and intense cruelty and profanity", where s/he is "kept alive but in a state of injury".

Even though forced separations occurred occasionally, the mere fact that they were possible and that from time to time they did take place was enough to strike terror in the hearts of all slaves (Patterson1982:5). This is where the psychological facet of dominant power plays out; it is within the capacity to persuade another to change the way he or she perceives his or her interests and circumstances. The fear of separation had the power to transform significantly the way that slaves behaved and conceived of themselves (*ibid*). Numerous scholars regard natal alienation as a critical feature of slavery. Patterson (1982:5) further consolidates that any definition of slavery should emphasize that natal alienation is the distinguishing element of forced servitude; it is not the loss of liberty, political or civil, but the perpetual and inheritable relation of loss. (Patterson1982:37) further explains how the position of mastership is bolstered by the power of myth-making and character-making particularly about his objects: the slaves (Patterson1982:11). 'The slave was his ultimate human tool, as imprintable as the master wished" (Patterson1982:37). This "myth making" can be achieved through the manipulation already existing symbols and institutions, or they create new ones relevant to their needs. The full mechanics of this process will be covered in the scope of this work in the second and third chapter.

## 1.3. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CAPE AS A SETTLEMENT

It is an immutable fact that Cape society was plural at its birth (Reddy 2000:27). The first generation of white settlers in the Cape were the Dutch men who had worked for the Dutch East India Company. These men were the company officials, the ship's officers, slave dealers, the merchants and the sailors who had spent more of their lives in the East Indies than in Europe. As a result they were fluent in the *lingua franca* used in slave markets and the by port world of the Indian Ocean (Reddy 2000:27).

These men later formed part of the Free Burgher class in Cape society. The Free Burgher system was started by the Company to encourage people to stay and to farm with crops and

livestock. Van Der Ross (2005:21) explains that the conditions were that the men had to stay for at least twenty years, so long as they did not compete with the Company by either paying local people more for cattle or charging visiting ships less for produce than the Company did. The first nine married free burghers were granted land[22] along the Liesbeeck River for twelve years. This system formed the foundations of a permanent colony. He further adds that its popularity can be attributed to the fact that most of the Company servants who took advantage of the Free Burgher system, were people who were very poor in Holland and could not even dream of owning so much land back home (Van Der Ross 2005:21). The Free Burgers (the private citizens) at the Cape were the only group who could own land; however they did not have any say in the governing of the colony. They also had to take an oath of loyalty to the States-General, the Dutch government and the VOC. The VOC could and did ban troublesome burghers from the colony. The people living in the Cape Colony were very conscious of class hierarchy.

The VOC officials were at the top of the class ladder, followed by the burghers, the slaves and then the indigenous people. The enslaved people imported to the Cape came from the perimeter of the Indian Ocean basin; they originated from one of the oldest slave trading areas in the world, dating back 1580 B.C. (Shell1994:32). While this claim has the potential to be interpreted as a legitimization of Cape slavery it is critical to note that when the (Dutch East India Company) established control in the East Indies they encountered an urban slave system already in existence which made it easier for them to exploit it in order to attain slaves. Worden (1998:68) supports that in pre-colonial Java slaves were kept within households, for both domestic labour and for social prestige, at the same time they were permitted to seek their own subsistence on the side as skilled labourers. The Cape colony subsequently followed the same pattern. The other reason for importing slaves was that the Dutch East India Company was prohibited[23] from enslaving the indigenous inhabitants. Bolstered by the

[22]Land was so easy to acquire that every settler could acquire a farm. But no free person or settler wanted to work for someone else. So slaves were imported and the local Khoi were also enserfed (Shell1994:403).

[23]The Dutch West India Company forbade the DEIC from poaching on its slave preserves, Angola and the entire west coast of Africa. Because slave trading prospects on the East coast of Africa were poor and dominated by the well-armed Muslim and Portuguese slavers in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, they then turned to mainly to the East, to the Indonesian and Indian possessions of the Dutch commercial empire (Shell 1994:412).

increasing need for more labour than could be supplied from Holland or locally this led to the decision to use slave labour from elsewhere. Due to the fact that the Dutch had colonies in the East Indies, it was convenient for them to source their slaves from there (Van Der Ross 2005:17).

Robert Ross (1983:13) affirms that unlike the slaves who crossed the Middle Passage[24], the slaves brought to the Cape were "exceedingly heterogeneous", for they came from the Indonesian archipelago: Malaysia, Java, Batavia, Bali, Bougies, Celebes, Maccasar and the Philippines. They were bought in India, the coast of east India, the coast of Malabar in west India and from Ceylon in Sri Lanka. Africa was also a popular source for slaves; the African slaves came from Angola, Madagascar and from the East African coast. The ethnic heterogeneity of the slaves in the favour of the masters' interests because it made it difficult for the slaves unite despite their differences to form a cohesive force in order to bring any form of liberation. The ethnic origin of slaves ranged from African to Asian and because of this extreme diversity, the world the slaves made at the Cape did not offer the same degree of refuge from the full impact of the master and his control system as it did in America (Worden 1985:04).

## 1.4. THE MYTH OF "WHITE" UNIVERSALITY AND COLONIAL STEREOTYPES

In this section I examine the violence underpinning the development of colonial stereotypes in South Africa. While this section may seem digressive to the establishment of the Cape Minstrel Carnival, it serves to explore the philosophy that bolstered the practice of organising communities according to racial hierarchical structures. The symbolic violence of stereotypes cannot be underplayed because stereotypes were used as methods of justifying the exploitative relations of slavery. The development of colonial stereotypes is relevant to the main study of carnival because it is precisely the myth of "white" universality that a creolised cultural practice such as Carnival destabilises and subverts.

[24]The Middle Passage refers to the forced voyage of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the America's www.miriam-webster.com, accessed on 19 May 2010.

The destruction of the Khoisan upon the arrival of the Dutch serves as a working example of how the myth of "white" universality was employed to justify the genocide committed against the indigenous Khoisan. Contrary to popular opinion, the Dutch claimed the site of modern Cape Town by right of conquest, not by the occupation of an "empty land" (Worden 1998:24). The pervasive notion that the Cape was an "empty land" gives legitimacy to its invasion and seizure by the Dutch. Furthermore it is laced with the stereotype that Africa lacked history before the arrival of the Europeans. This stereotype is based on the European notion of history which considers itself the universal standard of measurement. Firstly the imposition of a European idea of history in an African context is absurd because it assumes that history is a singular homogenous thing. Whereas there many kinds of history as Casely-Hayford (2012: 4) asserts that "Yes history can be a list of corroborative dates and facts, but it could also be the ebb and flow between the dates and facts". History is not limited to material objects and buildings exclusively, oral tradition and cultural practices are also legitimate repositories of history that exist in Africa (Casely-Hayford (2012:13)

It is an acknowledged fact that when western historians talk about history they are referring to the story of civilization (Ashcroft and Griffin: 1995:56). Therefore when people say Africa lacks history, what they are really saying is that because Africa is outside of history it is "uncivilized". This notion suggests that Africa perhaps may have a past but not a history, more particularly an inglorious past to which "Europe brings the blessings of civilization for which Africa returns ingratitude" (Achebe 1995:57). According to post-colonial writers like Chinua Achebe (1995), the myth of white universalism has a pernicious effect in the way that it pervades colonial stereotypes, because it assumes that the "European equals the "universal". In this sense universalism becomes a homogenous and exclusive to those who occupy positions of hegemony. Thus, those who are universal are viewed as civilized and take it upon themselves to speak on behalf of humanity. It is these people who are presumed to be fully human and have a legitimate history. Subsequently, European notions of civilization have a history authorizing distinctions between humans and non-humans or not yet sufficiently human that might become human if given the appropriate training (Mbembe 2004:12). Therefore based on the assumption that Africa lacks history, being universal is not considered to be African (Ashcroft and Griffin1995:55). I shall explain further how this myth was used as

method of classifying the Khoisan communities who had inhabited the Cape long before the arrival of Dutch imperialism.

The Khoi Khoi and San[25] communities inhabited the Cape long before it became a colonial setting. They witnessed the Portuguese seafarer Bartholomew Dias[26] rounding the southern tip of Africa in 1488 a century a half before the Dutch arrived (Ross 1983:01). The process of Dutch imperialism commenced a series of wars between the Khoi Khoi and the Dutch in which the locals were no match for the well-armed Europeans. Furthermore the Dutch bolstered their numbers by allowing some 200 French Huguenots Calvinist protestants fleeing persecution by King Louis XIV, to take refuge and settle at the Cape in 1688 (Van Der Ross2005:32). For centuries, perhaps even millennia, the San and the Khoi Khoi intermarried and coexisted, so the distinctions are sometimes blurred. Anthropologists and historians distinguish these people into two separate groups the Khoi Khoi[27] "Hottentots" and San "Bushmen"[28]

There are many sensational stories about the where the San originate, one of them is that they came from a mixture of African people with the people of Asia. There are claims that this contact took place more than a thousand years ago (Van Der Ross 2005:24). Schapera

[25]The San call themselves the Ju/Huansi which means "The real people", but they are usually referred to as "The Bushmen" or 'The Basarwa'(Hulme 2002:10). Similar to the Khoi Khoi, the San live a nomadic existence. There was no ownership of land between the Khoi Khoi and the San, the Khoi Khoi declined drastically in numbers and in strength as a result of the smallpox pandemic and from submitting to European command (Schapera1965:04). However in comparison to the Khoi khoi, the San were violently resistant to assimilating European ways, hence they still are among the last of the remaining hunter and gatherer societies in an agricultural and industrializing modern world (Hulme 2002:11). Marais (1957:06) emphasises that their nomadic existence and constant movement rendered their hold on the soil weak, additionally they readily shared their grazing land with strangers and collectively these were some of the factors which enabled the "whites" to invade their land. The Khoi Khoi and the San believed that they had given to the Europeans the right to share their land, however they soon found instead that the colonisers did not share but possessed and excluded (Marais1957:06).

[26]The first recorded Europeans to sight the Cape were the Portuguese, who passed by on their search for a sea route to India and for spices. Bartholomew Dias rounded the Cape in 1488, naming it Cabo da Boa Esperança (Cape of Good Hope), but didn't linger long, as his sights were fixed on the trade riches of the east coast of Africa and the Indies. The Portuguese had no interest in a permanent settlement. The Cape offered them little more than fresh water, since their attempts to trade with the Khoisan often ended in violence, and the coast and its fierce weather posed a terrible threat to their tiny caravels.

[27]Hottentots derives from the Dutch word Huttentut meaning stammerer or stutterer, used by the early Dutch settlers on account of the peculiar clicks which gave their speech a distinctive character (Schapera 1965:44).

[28]Bushmen is considered a highly offensive and derogatory word in contemporary South Africa, Hunter-gatherer is a more appropriate alternative

(1965:26) asserts that the San have long been regarded as the earliest human inhabitants in the whole of Southern Africa. After being driven by the gun and the spear further into the interior, consequently today they are mainly confined to the central and Northern Kalahari Desert in Namibia and Botswana. They can also be found in Angola, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Schapera 1965:45).

Anthropologists have attempted to establish a connection between the San and the Pygmy peoples inhabiting the equatorial regions of the Congo, because both groups share some of the same physical features such as the shortness of their figure and the texture of their hair. Some Europeans naturalists have even so gone far as to not consider them as part of humankind (Shell 1994:38).There has been a lot of racist sensation, contestation and contradiction about their origins and genetic make-up, which tarnishes the validity of western racial classification discourse.

> In the first half of the 20th century, the view that the San was unutterably different from the Black people of Africa held sway. Dr Robert Broom suggested that they had affinities with China and were 'stunted and degenerate descendants' of Korana. Others thought they had descended from another big headed earlier people called by some the Boskop race or the Bushamanoid people. The view of their absolute distinctness reached zenith about 1955, when Dr J.C. Trevor of Cambridge University elevated the Khoisan group to the status of the fifth major racial constellation of the world, which he called the Khoisaniform alongside the Caucasiform, Mongoliform, Negriform and Australiform branches of Homo sapiens (Tobais1978:03).

The quote above by Tobias reveals that the Khoi Khoi and the San have been objects of great perplexity and erraticism within western attempts at racial classification systems which were beyond a shadow of a doubt based on pseudo-scientific research. There is absolutely no empirical measure or validity in these theories (Reddy 2000:18). By European standards, the Khoisan represented the quintessential “savage” because of their passive relationship to nature’s resources. They were lacking in what some European men would consider as the makings an industrious civilization. The determinants being productive labour power, the accumulation of private property and money (Reddy 2000:16). All of which according to

Europeans formed the foundation "civilization". Colonial racist discourse assumes that the Khoisan's "low level of production, military technology, lack of land cultivation" rendered them, "lazy, immoral and of low intelligence" despite having large herds of cattle and sheep that provided the early settlers with meat and sustenance (Reddy 2000:18).

These stereotypes were reproduced and heralded by acclaimed European philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Such beliefs originated during the heyday of eighteenth century pseudo-science in the form of "scientific"-racism. These racist stereotypes were prolifically circulated and consumed by colonial enthusiasts and they have persisted till today in some societies and function to justify the inhumane crimes of the past (Reddy 2000:18). The conception of the "savage other" functioned as a category of comparison, supposedly distinguishing modern European man from the rest of humankind. Subsequently, Black people were dehumanized and objectified in order to facilitate the generalizations and stereotypes about them. These actions legitimized in universal terms their construction of the "other" and they opportunistically set themselves up as the normative standard of evaluation (Reddy 2000:21). Chinua Achebe (1995:55) supports that the myth of universality within European imperial discourse, is thus the primary strategy of imperial control. This myth necessitates that in order for Black people to become universal cum civilized, they had to remove themselves from "their heritage" and adopt western ways of being, and in this way they are humanized. Achebe (1995:60) further elaborates:

> It is as though being universal is some distant bend in the road which you may take if you travel out far enough in the direction of Europe and America, if you put adequate distance between yourself and your home

This transformation is sadly reminiscent of natal alienation, a process bound up in the oppressive nature of slavery. On the other hand according to (Erasmus 2001 and Constant-Martin), it is precisely the condition of slavery that enabled slaves in the Cape to create themselves anew against the dehumanising force of a natal alienation. By asserting their capacity for invention the slaves fought against social death (Constant-Martin 2010:184). This process of creation and invention under servitude is called creolisation, which enabled slaves to reconstruct a positive image about themselves against the grain of negative stereotyping. Constant-Martin (2010:185) explains what creating a creole identity entailed:

> Creating a creole identity is an "interactional and

> transactional aggregate" that combines elements from areas of origin of the settlers and slaves and of all those with whom they mixed even if passingly it is a "diffracted but reconstituted world" where an original human entity is invented.

The slaves in the Cape colony as in North America and Brazil came from diverse areas and for this reason it was difficult for them to rebuild or recreate their original communities therefore they had to start anew by borrowing and mixing fragments of different cultures, converging and intermingling in order to create an "original". "They invented tools that allowed them to communicate and to feel a sense of togetherness" Constant-Martin (2010:185). For example the Afrikaans language was a product of this environment, it is a language born out of creolisation that was used by both masters and slaves in the Cape colony. It important to note that creolised identities do not exclusively belong to those who were held in bondage, but the masters and madams in the colony also collaborated in its inception and proliferation. According Constant-Martin (2010:189), Creole identity was "ravaged" by the introduction of segregation laws which served to isolate groups that whom together had invented creole culture. "White" people rejected their share in creole culture, Afrikaans which has as creole origins was transformed into an instrument of "white" supremacist power. The rendering of the Afrikaans language as a "pure" "white" language during apartheid was so efficient, that in contemporary South Africa there are many people who are taken aback by the fact that Afrikaans is in fact a language born out of slavery in South Africa. This ignorance not only signifies the "invisibility" of slavery from the national historic narrative but it further exposes a history of disassociation from "white" Afrikaaners in their complicity to the history of slavery  and their contributions to creolisation in South Africa.

## 1.5. KROTOA-EVA: OUR UNCANNY [M] OTHER

The year 1994 saw the inversion of power in South Africa; the death of apartheid and the birth democracy (Coetzee 1997). Low ranking members of society such as prisoners and "terrorists" who had been classified enemies of the state; went through status reversal, they took centre stage and occupied positions of authority. Those who had "ruled" and "lorded" over the majority for centuries, were dethroned; they stepped down and observed from the margins as the new flag was raised. Since then South Africans have been going through a dynamic process of interaction, straddling in-between thresholds of old and new identities.

Old ways of being are being problematised and sanctioned while new ones are being moulded and negotiated.

In 2002 Anna van Wyk, a NNP[29] member of parliament asserted that almost all "white" people in South Africa have a slave ancestry. According to Pumla Gqola (2010:114) Van Wyk stated that this is a "well known" fact, she claimed in her speech that slaves had left a "good legacy", and this should be celebrated. Her address was delivered outside the Slave Lodge Museum. "That an NNP member of Parliament could make this assertion in contemporary South Africa" and state that it is a "well known fact" that should be "celebrated" serves as an illustration of identity mutation (Gqola 2010:114). Periods of social change, are often accompanied by the re-presentation of identities as groups attempt to adapt to a new milieu. In this reconstitutive process, the certain aspects of identity representation which no longer hold appeal or capital are reframed (Hendricks in Erasmus 2001:32). Here we note how Afrikaans is reframed with emphasis put on a slave and indigenous genealogical parentage. Whiteness Remixed, or Remembered Impurity, Shame and Television is an interesting chapter in Pumla Dineo Gqola's book entitled *What is slavery to me? Postcolonial/Slave memory in Post-Apartheid South Africa* published in 2010.Gqola is concerned with what happens when a country's changing political landscape destabilises older claims to identity and power (2010:105). Gqola evaluates the shifts and remixed ways of negotiating Afrikaaner "white" identities with reference to their claimed slave ancestry[30] ( Gqola 2010:106).

Mikhael Bhaktin (1984) presents us with a framework of carnival that highlights movement and multiplicity, through images of ambivalence and ambiguity. His ideas provide a potent framework within which to tentatively analyse and facilitate a discussion about the claiming

[29]The National Party was renamed NNP (New National Party) during the transition period from apartheid to post-apartheid (Gqola 2010)

[30]There are growing discussions within South African historical studies on whether the distinctions made by the VOC/DEIC, between forms of unfree labour (slavery versus indentured servitude) had any materiality beyond the law books. Gqola's (2010) approach is based on Abraham's (1997) (2000) who demonstrated that on the ground the conditions of the Khoisan were highly similar to those of legally called slaves. This applies to definitions of Baartman as slave rather than contracted worker. In her book *what is slavery to me?* Pumla Dineo Gqola (2010:15) reads Krotoa as a slave, in this chapter, I implement the same method.

of Krotoa's legacy by some Afrikaaners as their *stammoeder* their Afrikaaner mother. By applying the idea of inversion and transformation which is bound up in the philosophy of the carnivalesque, the aim is to explore meaning out of a multiplicity of voices and positions (Bakhtin 1984). Claiming Krotoa-Eva. Figure 2 translates to the acknowledgement of intimate sexual relations with the colonised "other", thus the contamination of the "pure", "white" identity. The carnivalesque notion of transgression is in operation here, mocking the values that underpinned and continue to bolster white identity. I believe the story of Krotoa is pertinent to this chapter because it contextually represents the creolisation that contributed to the cultural inception of the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival. The story of Krotoa represents a counter narrative that represent a facet of Afrikaaner identity that was marginalised expecially during the Apartheid period.

Krotoa was considered a transgressive figure, not only by the Dutch but also amongst her own people, this sentiment consolidates the ambiguity of her status:

> Yes Krotoa. I've heard of your life amongst the strangers. It is as I have said that you are split down the middle like a rotten fruit. One half of you serves your own people; the other half serves the enemy. And each half will destroy the other, go away go away (Press in Coetzee 1997:04).

These words were uttered by an old Khoi woman, Nomasiqua, who warned Krotoa about the perils of her cross over negotiations between the Khoi and the Dutch. Krotoa was fluent in Dutch which enabled her to be a translator for both the Dutch and the Khoena[31] (Coetzee 1997). This quote is effective as it reveals that Krotoa was a hybrid personality at a time when Dutch and Khoi relations were tenuous. Nomasiqua compares Krotoa's double or hybrid identity to a rotten fruit split down the middle with each half serving her people the Khoi and the half serving the "enemy", the Dutch. This brings about Krotoa's tragic fate of alienation not being able to fit in among her people and the "other". Erasmus (2001:17) refers to creolisation, as cultural formations and identities historically shaped by the process of

[31]Krotoa-Eva's precise ethnic identity is hard to establish, the records claim her mother lived with the Gorinhaiqua, her uncle with the Gorinhacona and that her sister married chiefs from both the Chochoqua and Chainoqua (Wells 1997:03).

servitude. Within the same vein Apparudai (1986) explains that social identities created under servility are defined by marginality and ambiguity. One of the most initial instances of such a social identity was personified by the life of a Krotoa, a Khoi girl a relative of the Chochoqua chief Oedesoa (Wells 1997:02). Krotoa had at an early age learnt a bit of Dutch from shipwrecked sailors so upon the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck and his fleet, at the age of twelve she was incorporated into the van Riebeeck household as a servant and an informant. The van Riebeeck's gave her a western education and instructed her in Christian religion. She learnt to speak Dutch fluently and later on she was able to express herself confidently in Portuguese, which indicated her aptitude for languages. In this way Krotoa made herself indispensable to the Dutch as an interpreter because of her excellent command of the Dutch language (Wells 1997:05).

Krotoa's[32] acculturation into the Dutch way of life was facilitated by one of Jan van Riebeeck's nieces Elizabeth van Opdorp, who later proved to be a loyal friend and ally during Krotoa's demise. In his diaries Jan van Riebeeck described Eva as being "clothed", living in his house and speaking some Dutch. By this time, Eva was aware of how valuable to the Dutch "insider" Khoena[33] information was. The Dutch colonizers were vulnerable, not only

[32]Similar to Krotoa's life is a story of Malintzin, Malinalli or Malinche, who was a Nahua woman from the Mexican gulf coast. When the Spaniards invaded Mexico, she was given to Hernán Cortés as a slave, and later she became his mistress, interpreter and advisor (Esquivel 2007). Malinche is an ironically potent figure in Mexican history. She is understood in often conflicting aspects. Some revere her as the founding figure of the Mexican nation, some pity her as a quintessential victim, and like Krotoa some consider an embodiment of treachery. In contemporary Mexico there is a pejorative term that derives from her reputation; *malinchista* referring to a disloyal Mexican.Pocahontas in New England North America shared a similar fate. Pocahontas is a well-known figure in American history. The Disney movie "Pocahontas" is a recent popular watered down version of the story depicts Pocahontas's encounter with the English, however it is a politically correct representation that caters for a children's market. Pocahontas has a contentious legacy as one of the first Native American women who got baptised and married an Englishman John Rolfe at a time when the Native Americans were resisting colonial invasion (Bruchac:2005). Similar to Malinche and Krotoa she also acted as a mediator and translator. She mediated between the English colonials and the Powhatans, the social-linguistic group of which she derived. Pocahontas, Malinche and Krotoa occupy a conflicted space in history. On the one hand they represent the caricature of the feminine principle of surrendering and subordination especially in the face of conflict. A more nuanced reading of what they represent is hybridity, mediation and a "marriage" between two cultures, with one being foreign and the other being indigenous. On the other hand, there is a consistent pervasive sentiment that these three female figures were sell outs and traitors to their own people. This view is a response to the fact that Krotoa like Malinche and Pocahontas had sexual relations with the male colonials. However it necessary to take into account that more than often, a servile role performed by a female in a male dominated context, does lend itself to be vulnerable to some sort of sexual exploitation.

[33]The term Khoena over the more familiar "Khoi Khoi" or KhoiSan which is grammatically inclusive to indicate simply people, whereas Khoi Khoi translates as men of men. The term Khoi Khoi has simply been the choice of many male scholars and has a limited foundation in the records. Most of the information available about Krotoa

because of numerical weakness, but because of their ignorance of the local people and their customs. Invariably they placed a high premium on acquiring information upon which their survival was hinged (Wells 1997:08).

We don't know if Krotoa-Eva was sexually exploited when she was serving in Jan van Riebeeck's house hold; however what we do know that is that Krotoa-Eva consolidated her importance by becoming an interpreter and mediator between the Khoena and the Dutch. Her transition was emphasized by her change of clothing between Dutch dress and Khoi skins as she moved backwards and forwards between the two. Krotoa-Eva developed two separate identities; she was able to slip quite easily between her acquired Dutch identity and her original Khoena heritage. Karen Press published a book in 1990 on Krotoa's life titled *Bird Heart Stoning the Sea.* In this interpretation, Press (Press in Coetzee 1997:04) sheds light on the intricacy of Krotoa's intermediary role; she explains how others were disillusioned by her ability to transform herself.

> As soon as they had travelled a little way beyond the Fort, Krotoa threw off her Dutch clothes and put on her animal skins again. Now she was once more a Khoi Khoi. All the way home she sang. At first these were songs she had learnt from the Dutch women at the Fort, but as she got closer to the Chochoqua camp she sang more and more of the Khoi Khoi songs she had learnt as a child. It was as if her spirit was catching the spirit of her people, as it blew towards her on the wind

Krotoa-Eva's mediatory role as an interpreter raised issues about where her loyalties lay. Some members of the Khoena community started seeing her as Dutch collaborator[34]. They believed she was guilty of giving the Dutch 'secret' information. Ultimately the Khoena felt

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comes from the Dutch records, the Dutch referred to her as Eva over her birth name Krotoa. Wells (1997) believes this signifies the loss of her Khoena identity in the historical accounts.

[34] To officialise Krotoa-Eva's entry and acceptance into Dutch society, on the 3rd of May 1662 she was baptized in the church inside the Fort of Good Hope. In 1664 she got into a romantic relationship with Pieter van Meerhof a Danish explorer.On the 26th of April 1664 she became the first Khoi to be married according to Western customs (De Kock 1972:223). In 1665 Van Meerhof and his family left the Cape for Robben Island where he served as commander. After Van Meerhof's untimely death, he was killed on a slaving trip to Madagascar in 1667. Krotoa found herself in a precarious position she made numerous attempts to make amends with the Khoena but her efforts were met with hostility.

suspicious of some of Krotoa's mediatory actions.

She found herself rejected by both the Khoi and the Dutch, grief-stricken she had a mental breakdown and she resorted to alcohol abuse and prostitution. Hovering in between two somewhat enemies she was banished to Robben Island where she died in 1674 (Worden 1998:23). If one scrutinizes the fate of Krotoa the state of "always hovering in between" sealed by the rejection of both the Dutch and the Khoena, Achille Mbembe sheds more light into this condition, he reinforces that identities that are created during the process of servitude experience self- division, they become alienated from themselves. This separation, he says is supposed to result in a loss of familiarity with the self, to the point that, the subject having become estranged from him or herself, has relegated to a lifeless form of identity, a social death. Not only is the self not recognized by the other but the self no longer recognizes itself (Mbembe 2004:10).

Krotoa-Eva's children were placed in the care of her childhood friend Elizabeth Van Opdorp. They grew up as part of Dutch society and became the founding members of many Afrikaans lineages (Coetzee 1997:01). There are a lot of historical records about the relationships between slave women and slave holders; however there is virtually nothing about their relationships with free indigenous women. Krotoa-Eva is an enduring example of a woman who exercised debatable personal agency with regards to her relationships and interactions with white men. During (Wells1997:1) colonialism there were numerous indigenous women who utilized their sexuality and their prescribed gender roles of the day to not only enrich themselves but to also create new hybrid societies According to Wells (1998:417), Eurocentric racist historians believe Eva's life offers living proof that the Khoena were irredeemable savages and to black nationalists such as Yvette Abrahams, she personifies the widespread rape and abuse of indigenous women by the invaders. Interestingly enough, to some Afrikaans speaking artists and poets Eva has been constructed as the mother of the Afrikaaner nation, a tamed African who acquiesced to Europeaness.

During the period since the democratic elections in South Africa, when white guilt over Apartheid was at its zenith and rainbow nationalism was at its most auspicious, Krotoa's memory was resurrected (Coetzee 1998). A process of identity renewal was set in motion. There was been an emergence of new nationalities and new identity construction and Krotoa

the "talented translator and cultural broker", resurfaces again in a transitioning South Africa (Gqola 2010).

Carli Coetzee (1998) discusses new trends in the expressions of Afrikaaner identity that have surfaced. "Coetzee's essay focuses on a 1995 play in which Krotoa is referred to as "onse ma" (our mother), performed nationally to a supportive audience" (Gqola 2010:111). Krotoa-Eva is a woman whose life story has been written as part of a project to illuminate ignored parts of South African history. Her life story is one of destruction and breakdown yet has come to function as an analogue of the imagined South African nation. Her "blood" is now claimed by those whose ancestors denied any relation with her ancestors. Krotoa-Eva's life in post-apartheid is sublimated in theatre, in order to reposition Afrikaner identity in a changing political landscape. Krotoa is rendered a figure of ambivalence, and ambiguity: which creates a flexible realm of meaning enabling the potential for identity transformation, to those who claim her.

In Bakhtin's work (1984), the image of reversal symbolises the intellectual ideal of rethinking and finding multiple levels of meaning and it also functions as a method of questioning the legitimacy of hierarchies, and accepted social categories. The shifting of Krotoa-Eva's place in South African history from the darkness during apartheid to visibility in post- apartheid opens up a plethora of meaning that can be read from her legacy. The genealogical claims of Krotoa-Eva, functions paradoxically, like a mask, to reveal and disguise historic and current meanings of Afrikaans whiteness (Gqola 2010:124). "Masking", concurs Samuel Kinser (in Constant-Martin 2001:12) "stimulates expression of the self's multiplicity" Behind the mask, a reveller can be at the same time him/herself and another with whom he or she identifies, even partially or ephemerally. It engenders a combination and coexistence of the self and the other. The boundaries of social groups become porous. Apartheid strove to portray racist social relations as natural and unchanging; such relations were officialised as the norm. Krotoas-Evas story challenged the official narrative of apartheid, and as a result it was silenced.

Similarly with Krotoa-Eva many believed she betrayed and abandoned her Khoi roots as well as loyalties for the benefit of western interests and because of this betrayal, her "children" did the same by rejecting their lineage to her. There is political gain that accompanies this

acknowledgment of “mixed” blood and the Khoi contribution to South Africa. This move is especially useful to Afrikaners, many of whom had long denied their slave and indigenous ancestry publicly. By reclaiming her as their fore mother the Khoi woman Krotoa-Eva, these South Africans can gain what seems like a legitimate access to the new “rainbow family”.

Coetzee (1998) cautions that the attempts at the radical rewritings of South African history which situate themselves at the early Dutch Cape run the risk of perpetuating the myth of 1652 as founding moments. The danger lies in the assumption and implication that before the Dutch arrived, there was as yet no family worth writing about or remembering. This assumption ties in neatly with the pervasive stereotype that claims that South Africa is part of the “dark continent” with no history prior to the Dutch settlement, which reinforces that civilisation was brought to the Africa by Europe. Within that pervasive racist narrative, Krotoa-Eva becomes the mother whose children are fathered by Europe who is our significant mother worth remembering. It is in this way that her life story about fragmentation and breakdown begins to function as an interpreting metaphor for white identity. Afrikaaners returning to their roots have amnesia about how and why this mother of the Afrikaaner nation came to be forgotten; through remembering and reclaiming her, now these forgetful children hope to gain a claim and a stake to an African identity (Coetzee 1998). Krotoa offers Afrikaans speaking South Africans a way into South African identity, rearticulated in an African context. Krotoa becomes the mother of all. When in the 1970's research findings were published about present day Afikaaners' having a high percentage of Khoi and slave ancestry, their work was dismissed, angrily by many Afrikaaner intellectuals and political leaders. Now it is laughable that the mid–nineties, there would be some white people competing to discover that they are descended from Krotoa, the “stammoeder”, the founding mother of the Afrikaaner (Wells 1997:24).

The shift from Krotoa-Eva as undesirable, whose contribution to Afrikaner identity was disclaimed for nearly three centuries, to her embrace as a founding mother provokes questions. Claiming Krotoa-Eva as a foremother repositions Afrikaners in the present. Krotoa-Eva has been subject of an historical revisionist writing and genealogical claims that situate her new status as a founding mother are opportunistic (Coetzee 1998:112).

> Krotoa’s ‘reclamation’ as the Afrikaner mother who needs to remembered requires the paradoxical forgetting of the events

> of her life and her specific relationship to colonial Dutch and later Afrikaner identity formation. It requires deliberate 'forgetting' of her banishment from Dutch society after her husband's death as well as her historic inscriptions as an unfit mother whose children needed to be taken 'back' into Dutch society and away from her. For Krotoa's new use, the falsity of the claim to white racial purity needs to be laid bare (Gqola 2010:112).

For Afrikaners, the end of Apartheid marked the loss of the security ensured by membership of the dominant group, and a scramble in the new dispensation for new positions to inhabit. In contemporary South Africa, the legacy of Krotoa effectively is used as method of distancing and affinity to the history of slavery. It is used to distance Afrikaaner white identity from the lineage of their fathers by negotiating the connection and affinity to the genealogy of female slave forebears. Importantly the conflation of the two narratives, writes a narrative of creolisation into the national historic trajectory of Afrikaaner identity in South Africa.

## 1.6. THE GENDER ROLES OF SLAVES IN THE CAPE COLONY

The acquisition of a male slave is a life interest; that of a female slave is considered to be a perpetual heritage (Bird in Shell1994:32)

Within the maelstrom of conquest in the Cape colony; property rights, extermination, forced migration, hybridization and servitude, new sources of wealth were acquired and as a by-product, novel blends of humanity were created. Sexual license is a common ingredient in many slave societies, the absolute liberty that masters used, to satiate their sexual whims on female slaves reveals that at its core the institution of slavery was patriarchal. For woman, slavery was not only forced labour, but sexual exploitation which marks the very definition of enslavement, as it did not for men. Unlike their counterparts in the America's Cape slave women were excused from field work and were greatly valued for their domestic roles and for their reproduction of future slaves (Shell 1994:411).

A majority of Cape women slaves were domestic servants, the slave women were kept in the owners house, which also became their working and sleeping place, up until 1808 they played an important socio-biological roles in the slave owning family (Shell 1994:412). At the heart of the familial incorporation of slaves was the slave woman. Slave women were used in the

home for embroidery, knitting, gardening, but they were mainly valued for their adjunct biological duties, which had profound sexual and psychological implications for all in the orbit of the patriarchal household.

Ironically, even though the female slave was entrusted with the parental role of taking care of her master, madam and raising their children from infants to adults; she was denied her own status as an adult, she was infantilized and treated as a permanent minor of the slave institution. Slaves were not simply part of the family; they were “children” as well. The Dutch slave-owning society in the Cape referred to a slave man as a *jong* which translates to a boy and a grown woman was frequently called *meid* which translates to girl in English (Mason 2003:71)).The slave-owner's infantilization and hyper-sexualisation of slaves seemed to mirror, as well as unsettle the dynamic of power and desire that emerges from the core of the Freud’s oedipal complex. Many post-colonial feminists agree that it is virtually impossible to speak candidly about race and slavery without talking about sex (Gqola 2010:17). The sexual relations between the slave owner and the slave women are testament to the unwitting contradiction and failure of this symbolic paternalism. Since the “success” of paternalism means that the taboo of incest effectively deters such sexual transgressions. Within the context of slavery, white masculinity represented the law of the father and the pinnacle of colonial power, and the slave women was positioned at the base (Sharifa in Campbell 2007:94).

The wanton behavior of white men was legitimated through the construction of stereotypes that represented slave women as lustful women whom impulse overwhelmed all restraint. This eased the conscience of white men and justified their exploits (Sharifa in Campbell 2007:97).The commodification and sexualisation of female slaves highlighted their sexual function. The construction of slave women as promiscuous and immoral renders slave women as sexual objects with a purely sexual function and they were essentially defined by this sexual function. Ironically miscegenation a relation valued low in a social sense was actually valued highly in a commercial sense. Slave women were beneficial to the expansion of the slave population especially after the slave trade was abolished. When the trading of slaves was abolished in 1807 by Britain, it didn’t mean that in the colonies the practice of slavery was stopped and slavery still thrived. However it meant that no new slaves could be imported into the colony, the selling of humans became illegal. As a consequence slave women became

the primary source of expanding the master's slave labour force. There was commercial profit to be made, in keeping the female slaves pregnant with future slaves. The children of female slaves inherited their mother's status and were rendered slaves automatically even if their fathers were white slave owners. Hence the prevailing stereotype of "promiscuous" slave women conveniently coincides with the entrepreneurial efforts of slave owners. [35]

Several sexual relationships between masters and slaves were consensual. It was common for slave owners and their sons to seduce slave women into consensually sleeping with them with the promise of freedom, but not surprisingly in many cases these pledges never came to fruition (Mason 2003:97). Such relationships, did not only occur in South Africa, but happened wherever white colonists have settled in other countries and has in the same manner produced populations of mixed descent known by various names[36] and in South Africa, they were later identified as a part of the population that the Aparthied defined as "coloured".The domestic configuration of Cape slavery with women inside the house, men outside- was advantageous to the slave-owner in more ways than one. The segregation of slaves by sex helped to undermine slave solidarity as a result there were few in any traditions of continuity. With limited options for an independent family life, slaves at the Cape were not allowed to marry at the Cape until 1823, fifteen years prior to abolition consequently slaves were tied and hopelessly forced to identify with the owners family (Mason 2003:71). Although female slaves were susceptible sexual exploitation, nonetheless they had a better chance of escaping their bondage than the male slaves. Women saw that their greatest chance of escape was through the settler family, whether this was through nanny manumission[37] or concubine manumission [38](*ibid*). Consequently before 1808, the year the slave trade was abolished most

[35]Slaveholders were ordained through established laws that stated that, the children of slave woman shall in all cases, follow the condition of their mothers and "this was done to administer to their own lusts, and make a gratification of their sexual desires profitable as well as pleasurable; for by this cunning arrangement, the slaveholder, in cases not a few, sustains to his slaves the double relation of both father and master" (Douglass 1986:49).

[36]In America the mixing of European colonists and American Indians led to the Metis (pronounced may-tee), in Mexico they were the Mulatto's and Chicano's.In India they are called Anglo-Indians (formerly half-castes, East Indians and Eurasians).In the French colonies such as Mauritius, the mixing produced people called creoles. (Van Der Ross 2005:92)

[37]Wet nurses were readily manumitted at the Cape (Van Der Ross:2005).

[38]There were many affairs between masters and their female slaves and sometimes this would result in being

manumitted slaves were female. In early Cape society, society members did not condemn a master's sexual exploitation of his female slave, but their institutions did everything to make it possible and almost nothing to prevent it from occurring (Mason 2003:99). The relative powerlessness of female slaves rendered difficulty for them to remain unavailable for their master's sexual disposal.

Patriarchal and ideological biases twice burdened slaves because they were subordinated and exploited by both virtue of being women and their slave status (Mason 2003:90). The slave women's oppression was strengthened by the additional burden of gender bias: as a result between them and their mistresses/women slave-owners there could be no solidarity or "sisterhood of the oppressed". Even though the carnal exploitation of slave women infuriated the white mistresses, their distress was not caused by the harm that was inflicted on the female slaves, but because it was humiliating and they could do very little to prevent or stop it from occurring (Mason 2003:99). Mistresses also had the liberty and licenses to use violent means to control their slaves as freely as their husbands and their sons, Mason (2003:99) emphasizes that the mistresses 'physical abuse of the victim of sexual exploitation was only emblematic of their own weakness within the patriarchal arrangement. White women could not condemn their husband's behaviour or take any disapproving course of action because they were too dependent on their husbands socially and economically, instead they would lash out at their husband's object of sexual gratification.

Marginalisation should be understood as a binary concept, that is only simply applicable all women homogenously, however, it is a shifting and relative concept that should take cognisance to other factors such as class. Binary marginality could not address the changing hierarchical and domestic nature of Cape slave society (Shell 1994:404). Marginality has to be a regarded as a relative concept that can operate at every layer In South Africa, the indigenous people, female slaves, male slaves and free blacks were all fundamentally marginalized, though each in quite different ways and extent. For example even though white women were free they were still marginalized in the sense that patriarchy limited their agency. They were economically dependent on their husbands especially in cases when their husbands would

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manumitted by her master (ibid)

force sexual relations upon their female slaves. However Mason (2003:90) states that as much as this patriarchal practice validated the subordination of both slaves and women by treating them as perpetual children, it never reduced white women in the slave-holding class to the level of slaves. On the contrary they enjoyed the privileges of colour and status that female slaves could not share.

Shell (1994:403) sheds more light into this shifting application of marginality, and he defines marginality as a subjective notion, he claims(1994:403) that as much as female slaves were marginal by their status of being the slave-owners property, at the same time they were not marginal humans on the periphery of the family, in fact were an integral part of the family because they looked after the slave-owners family and raised their children, performed domestic duties and sometimes sexual duties for their masters. In comparison to the male slaves, female slaves were less marginalized. On the other hand perhaps more marginalised because they could get raped at a whim. However, the male slaves worked outdoors in the fields hence by the proximity of that, they could not be incorporated into the slave-owners family unit. As a result the male slave chances for manumission were very low. According to Mason (2003:101) the household was the central locus of where slave relations where produced and at the Cape very few slaves escaped the might of the household. Relationships within it were sometimes affectionate but often harsh, and occasionally abusive. Relationships within the household always hovered ambiguously between the poles of resistance and submission. Mason (2003:101) uses a quote by Willie Lee Rose to validate his stance, Rose was a distinguished commentator on the American slave south, 'it was the nature of slave-owning households that they invited love-hate relationships, a certain nervous stability, a discernable atmosphere of tension a pervading sense of incongruities locked in interminable suspension.

## 1.8. THE INFLUENCE OF SLAVERY IN THE DOMESTIC SPACE

Slavery in South Africa was more domestic based as oppose to the rest of the new world were slavery was plantation based (Shell 1994). It was in the domestic setting that members of South African society first knew and accommodated each other. The white settler domestic

space in South Africa over the last two hundred years has been a kaleidoscopic institution: the domestic service has involved the Blacks and Europeans as well. Slavery brought different people together, within the settler household. Shell claims that the slave period, from 1652 to1838, was the authentic gestation period of South African culture (Shell 1994). He further claims that the intimacy of the domestic setting as oppose to the plantation system of the America's allowed for the convergence of languages, religions, cultures, attitudes of slaves and colonist all of which fused and changed in cultural exchange. As a result this exchange set in motion the conditions under which creole culture was constructed. The legacy of creole culture of South Africa has been under-examined, "with its new cuisine, its new architecture, its new music, it's melodious, forthright and poetic language." It is interesting to note that the Afrikaans language which is considered by many as a language mainly deriving from Dutch was first expressed in the Arabic script of the slaves (Shell: 1994). The domestic space was the arena were the emergent orders such as Apartheid were first instilled and inculcated. Shell (1994) states that

> It was within the domestic space that the colonial attitudes were first articulated and received in their bold and crude forms, it was there that the patriarchal and paternalist orders emerged along with the systems of class, colour, gender, religion and privilege.

The emergence of the Afrikaners, a term that etymologically denotes "locally born" and was first used during the early nineteenth century used for slaves born of European fathers and slave mothers (Shell 1994). Shell asserts that the term "Afrikaaner" should properly encompass all those who were born into Cape society it should not only be exclusive to white South Africans with Dutch ancestry. Slave ancestors injected diversity and challenge into an oppressive settler culture, bending and finally transforming it, creolising it into a new culture (Shell 1994: 404).

In summary, Shell (1994:414) concludes that until 1994 South African historians have been reluctant to devote their attention into the history of slavery in South Africa, or more specifically into the entire social world of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth century Cape colony.

## 1.9. THE HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF "COLOURED" IDENTITIES

The "coloured" community was not identified in terms of distinctive characteristics but was instead conceived in a negative fashion, with reference to other groups, in terms of what was not. Erasmus (2001) describes this perception as a "lack" or "taint" or in terms of remainder or excess of which does not fit a classificatory scheme. It reinforces the idea that "coloured" people were not in the same standing as other groups, and that their claims to autonomous group status usually articulated in terms of "nation", people or "race" was deficient or lacking a degree of authenticity (Adhikari 2005: 14-15).

In his book entitled *Not White Enough, Not Black Enough,* Mohamed Adhikari (2005:11) discussed the historical trajectory of "coloured" identity and he claims that the prevailing perceptions of "colouredness" fit into one of his three paradigms of "coloured" identity formation. The first paradigm is essentialist in its constitution because it is based on the idea that "colouredness" is a product of racial "miscegenation" dating back to the early days of the Cape colony. This view is bolstered by the idea that racial hybridity is in "essence" of "colouredness". This essentialist notion implies that South African society consists of distinct races of which "colouredness" is a mixed combination. Adhikari (2005:34) says that essentialist approach embodies conventional wisdom about "coloured" identity, and virtually all popular writing and most of the older and more conservative works are cast in this mold (Adhikari 2005:34). This is most notable in official definitions of the term "coloured", in which the category, was usually described as consisting of those people who were neither "white" nor "black". To white supremacists, they presented the threat of a surreptitious permeation into white society by fair skinned "coloureds" raising the spectre of race degeneration.

The second approach, which Adhikari (2005:35) labels the "instrumentalist approach", was pioneered by the radicals and liberal scholars who wanted to distance themselves from any form of racist thinking. This approach stems from the refusal to give credence to Apartheid thinking. It emerged in the 1980's as a reaction against the prejudicial assumptions of the traditional mode of analysis that I discussed earlier. Adhikari (2005:35) explains that the

second approach is based on the principle that “coloured” identity was employed as a divide and rule strategy by the ruling white minority to prevent black African South Africans from forming a united front against racism and exploitation. This approach was influenced by the political correctness of the post-Soweto era; it worked as a form of denial of “coloured” complicity and expediency in racist thinking.

Adhikari’s (2005) research is based on the third paradigm that follows the principles of social constructionism. This approach critiques the inadequacies of the first and the second approach. The third approach recognizes the fluidities in the processes of “coloured” self-identification and the ambiguities in the expression of identity. The first approach which is essentialist is a product of a profoundly Eurocentric perspective and the instrumentalist approach is that exaggerates the resistance of the “coloured” people to white supremacy (Adhikari 2005:35).

In her book entitled *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place*[39], Zimitri Erasmus (2001) calls for the definition of “coloured” identity to not be defined by racial mixture. (Erasmus 2001:16) She claims that attempts to define this identity in terms of mixture buys into notions of racial purity that can be traced into nineteenth century European eugenicists. She says that if all cultural formations involve borrowing from various cultural forms, this means that all identities can be seen or read as culturally hybrid and thus it should not be difficult to conceive of coloured identities as such, rather than in-betweens or interims of “race mixture” or “miscegenation”. Although it is true that Colonialism and Apartheid has played a crucial role in the formation and consolidation of “coloured” identities, we can’t simply dismiss them as Apartheid labels imposed by whites. They have been made and re-made by coloured people themselves in their attempts to give meaning to their everyday lives. Erasmus (2001:15) demands that coloured identity should be re-imagined and redefined in a manner that breaks away from the straight-jacket of racial identity.

[39]This book argues that “coloured” identities are based on cultural creativity, creolised formations shaped by South Africa’s history of colonialism, slavery, segregation and apartheid. This conceptualisation undermines the common sense view that conceives “colouredness as something produced by the mixture of “purer” cultures. Instead it stresses the ambiguity and ceaseless fluidity of “coloured” identity formations while remaining conscious of the conditions under which they are produced (Erasmus 2001:14).

The pitfall of both these approaches is that they deny the significant role people play in constructing their own identities. Essentialist interpretations do this by assuming "colouredness" is an inbred quality that comes from miscegenation and the instrumentalist approach plays down the complicit role that the "coloured" community played in the accommodation of the Apartheid racial system. Both the instrumentalist and the essentialist share the premise that "colouredness" is something negative and an undesirable product of racism. The instrumentalist and the essentialist paradigms deny people agency, and thus contribute further to a passive marginalization. This is achieved through the denial of their role in the basic cognitive function of creating and reproducing their own social identities. Basically, it accepts "colouredness" as a white imposed categorization (Adhikari 2005:35).

Adhikari (2005:36) believes that people exhibited a much more complex reaction to white supremacism; they expressed protest as well as accommodation, resistance as well as collaboration and complicity[40].The accommodation, complicity and collaboration with white supremacism surfaced through hopes of assimilation. Assimilation[41] into "whiteness" spurred hopes of future acceptance within apartheid dominant society. In his book entitled *Native Nostalgia* Jacob Dlamini (2009) expresses similar sentiments when he questions what it

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[40]"Coloured" communities had a status of relative privilege which depended on "exclusivity and conformity with white racist expectations which discouraged affiliation with the broader black identity (Adhikari 2003:13). The resultant fear of being cast down to the status of black Africans was a further incentive to maintaining the status quo. The petit bourgeoisie and the elite of the upper strata of the "coloured" community were distinguished from the proletariat because of their relative affluence and literacy. They adhered stringently to the norms and the values of white middle class respectability, with the hopes of assimilating into dominant society. Granted that these aspirations were out of place with the socio-political realities of white supremacist South Africa however their intermediate status gave "coloured" people significant privilege relative to black Africans. The hopes of assimilation, together with the insecurities engendered by their intermediate status meant that in daily life the most consistent and insistent element in the expression of "coloured" identity was an association with "whiteness" and a concomitant distance from Africaness. Consequently, value was placed on fair skin and straight hair and the exclusive praising of "white" ancestors in the family lineage. The prevalence of the "white" mindedness gave rise to the sense of shame with regard to any personal association with blackness, or an aggressive bigotry towards Africans (Adhikari 2005:11)

[41]I can see how respectability and shame are key defining terms of middle class coloured experience. For me growing up coloured meant knowing that I was not only not white, but less than, not only not black, but better than black (as referred to African people)… In my community practices such as curling or straightening one's hair carried a stigma of shame. The humiliation of being "less than white" made "being better than black" a fragile position to occupy. The pressure to be respectable and to avoid shame created much anxiety (Erasmus 2001:13).

means when people in South Africa remember life during apartheid with fondness. There is existing literature that reproduces denial and underplays the role that “coloured” communities have in constructing their own identities. Mohamed Adhikari (2005) attempts to redress this shortcoming by contributing to a more nuanced or perhaps reflexive understanding of “coloured” identity, by exploring the ambiguities and contradictions, he puts emphasis on the role that people have played in making their group identity and consciousness (Adhikari 2005:36).

Stuart Hall (in Rudwick 1998) questions this very notion of group identity, by defining group identity as

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> The common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as “one people”, with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history.

What Stuart Hall is asserting here is that at a surface level, there is a pervasive commonplace understanding amongst people that all culture has a fixed irreducible “essence”, an essence “that” unites groups together monolithically as “one people” or as a nation. This shared “essence” provides us with what Hall (1990)describes as a “stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning” this concept of identity is very limited and flawed because it presents a picture of homogeneity and unity within groups when in fact there is an infinity of fractures and a diversity of differences amongst people. This rigid concept of identities fails to accept that cultural identities can never be stable because they are part of an infinite on-going social construction of which makes them never completed but - always in process (Hall 1996: 2). There is an implicit correspondence between Stuart Hall notion of cultural identities and Glissants articulation of what creolisation is. For Glissant (1992:142) creolisation is a process of infinite cultural transformation. Central to the concept of creolisation is not the celebration of cross-cultural formation but the disruption of the idea that creolisation results from mixed category between European and African identities. Glissant's argument questions the notion of “purity” as such, just as Hall questions the notion

of a “fixed irreducible essence”. The value of Glissant's concepts regarding creolisation is the emphasis on hidden histories of multiplicity. Both Glissant and Hall reject the notion of culture being a fixed and stationary entity.

“Coloured” identities are more specifically cultural formations born out of appropriation, dispossession and translation in the colonial encounter (Erasmus 2001:16). Underpinning the notion that there is no such thing as “coloured” culture and identity is the assumption that because “coloured” identity does not have an “essence” in the sense that black Africans are assumed to have one, that means that it is not a “real” identity. (Erasmus 2001:14) believes that this misunderstanding supports the taken for granted, common sense notion which views identities as natural and based on geographic locations, “pure” origins and shared experiences whereas all cultural formations involve borrowing and hybridity. Erasmus (2001:14) consolidates that “coloured” identities are distinguished by borrowing and creation just like all cultures except they are constructed under the very specific conditions of creolisation

Erasmus (2001:16) uses creolisation to refer to cultural creativity taking place under the conditions of marginality. “Creolisation involves the construction identity out of the elements of the ruling as well as subaltern cultures”. “Coloured” identities began in the colonial encounter between colonists (Dutch and British), slaves from the South and East India and from East Africa, and conquered indigenous people the Khoi and the San. The encounter and the power relations embedded in the encounter, resulted in the processes of cultural dispossession, borrowing and transformation- not just a “mixture” but a very particular “mixture” comprising elements of Dutch, British, Malaysian, Khoi and forms of African culture that have been appropriated, translated and articulated in complex and subtle ways. These ways acquire their specific cultural meaning once fused and translated (Erasmus and Pieterse 1999:179).Erasmus emphasises that “colouredness” must be understood as a creolised cultural identity born under specific historical conditions in South Africa.

## 1.10. SLAVERY AS A PRECURSOR TO APARTHEID

When slavery was abolished by the British in 1838, there was no substitute supply of labour to perform the agricultural and industrial labour. The freed slaves and their descendants have

continued to this day to form the mainstay of the rural and urban labour force in the Western Cape (Worden 2001:52**).** History did not repeat itself it merely lingered. Historically, white owners of land in the means of production in South Africa developed their system of class domination as the one of racial domination. They restricted property ownership and the political rights of Blacks well as subjecting them to various forms of extra economic domination which served to perpetuate their economic dependence and to serve the whites with labour (Johnston 1976:23).

The exploitation of labour was derived largely from the system of racial domination. Racial domination has been a way in which whites in South Africa have maintained power and authority. The key legislation in this case was The Native Land Act of 1913 which gave 87% of South Africa's territory to white people and which Black people could not purchase (Naidoo 1986:23). The separation of Black people from the land compelled them to seek employment (Naidoo 1986). According to Naidoo this was done to remedy the shortage of labour on the white farms. Naidoo maintains that behind this labour Act came from those who wanted to maintain cheap labour by reducing squatters and share croppers to the level of labour tenants (Wilson and Bundy1927:71).Thus the conquest of blacks and the appointment of their lands was the basis of migrant labour system, whereby cheap labour was secured (Naidoo 1986:22). The migration of blacks was primarily controlled by the pass system and the contract system.

The pass system was the control of movement control and labour regimentation serving to strengthen the white grip over the Black movement by controlling and directing their movements. Naidoo claims that that this pass system was secured by a complex legislative framework in which the Natives Act of 1913 was crucial as it restricted Africans from entering white areas (Naidoo 1986). Each amendment of the Act made it more difficult for black Africans to move into the urban areas and settle with their families. By 1930 the Act was amended to give local authorities the power over black African from towns unless they certified proof that they had accommodation. Collectively these controls amounted to a brutal system of forced labour. The purpose of the pass system and contracts system was constructed to ensure the extreme powerlessness of the Blacks in general and to ensure the maximum

exploitability of labour.

Shell (1994:20) draws parallels and similarities between the institution of slavery and the system of Apartheid and even though this interpretation has been refuted, he puts forward compelling legal and demographic similarities. His first claim is that both systems were underpinned by violence and coercion. Cape slaves and twentieth century black South African workers were both denied a broad and suspiciously similar range of human rights. They could not move freely, they could not own land, under both Apartheid and slavery, workers were selected carefully by age and sex. Their lives were planned by the Apartheid government from the cradle to the grave. Workers were brought in from the rural homelands to the city, the core area of the economy, highlighting the element of migration breaking up the family unit, for example the migration of domestic workers and miners. Both groups were natally alienated, which means that, their condition at birth limited their future rights, neither could they have an independent family life. The systematic exploitation of the black men and the informal incorporation of the black women into the white domestic space, are profoundly similar in both societies (ibid). Within both groups their mother tongues were stilled. Their political identities were effectively, even ruthlessly, eliminated. Both slaves and modern workers in South Africa were in, Orlando Patterson's prominent phrase, “socially dead”. The demographic structures and the social structures of the two economic systems are uncannily similar. Slavery in South Africa was abolished in 1838, mining and the industrial revolution followed closely on the heels of abolition.

Shell asserts that a definition of slavery must allow for historical change. Slavery in South Africa may be defined as a system in which a person was freely disposed of to another free person in a legally sanctioned sale, transfers, or will, or hired out for work, without any consultation of, but not necessarily without any compensation to, the slave person. However according to Shell (1994) slaves at the Cape did have rights, slaves could inherit, bear witness, earn money, and initiate legal cases. However they were denied important family–centered rights. It is an immutable fact that slavery and slaves made a considerable demographic contribution to South African society in terms of the composition of the “white” people (Van der Ross 2005:100). If not omitted, most histories of creolisation, multiplicity

and “miscegenation” have been marginalized from the official narratives of South Africa. Apartheid propaganda is notorious for such crimes. This history was vilified because it threatened to contaminate the centre of Apartheid dogma, which centred on the fallacy of “racial” purity and segregation. Even though Apartheid has been officially “dismantled”, today in post-Apartheid South Africa many South Africans have internalized and inherited Apartheid's racially purist separatist dogma. However interestingly enough the recuperation and representation of South Africa's marginalised histories has been kindled within the contemporary film industry. This development is illustrated in the production of the film *Skin* 2010, [figure 3]. This evocative drama based on true events follows the bitter tale of Sandra Laing, a child born in 1955 into an officially white Afrikaans Laing family with an undeniable phenotypically “coloured” appearance as the result of genetic polygenic inheritance, or more colloquially a “throwback”, to a distant unknown black ancestor whose DNA had lain dormant for generations and had emerged in her (Fine 2009). The acclaimed Professor Himla Soodyall (2009) of genetics further supports that

> While Sandra's parents and the rest of her family may have all been 'pure white' in their outward appearance, they obviously carried recessive genes from these African ancestors going back into the 1600s which finally manifested themselves in Sandra.

Sandra was born to an officially white Afrikaans mother Sannie Laing who is depicted as tolerant even though under the patriarchal heel of an officially white Afrikaans father Abraham Laing, both fervent supporters of the National party government and their policies at the time. She had two white brothers but out of all of them Sandra had the darkest skin and the curliest hair resembling a so-called “coloured person”. The Laing’s lived comfortably in Piet Retief, an isolated conservative farming community, however when she enrolled at the local white school and entered into larger state controlled South Africa, Sandra's race became a conspicuous issue. At the age of ten she was dragged out of school by the police because the principal claimed she was not white. The government agreed and labelled her “coloured” because under Apartheid laws whites and “coloured's” had to be sent to different schools. Subsequently Sandra was expelled from her white school. Officials insisted that Sandra could not live with her family, because she was 'coloured' and they could not live with her in the

townships because they were white. A chain of subsequent struggles overwhelmed the Laing's and under state pressure their family structure crumbled and Sandra bore the brunt. Shunned by the whites at 15, she eloped with Petrus, an African man, but that insecure relationship left her with two children and a life that offered her no social identity, no roots except for her own personal strength (Fine 2009).Within the framework of this thesis Sandra Laing's story is emblematic of not only the devastating consequences of a racially regimented state but it brings to the fore the process of creolisation and its surreptitious origins of fluidity and multiplicity which continue to inform the foundations of South African society. The methodological stance of slavery as a shape shifting process is critical in uncovering, remnants of slave relations that have been moulded into and manifested in the cultural production of today.

### *Conclusion*

The preceding chapter has contextualised the apparent surge of slave memory within post-apartheid discourse. Slave memory could tentatively be interpreted within a carnivalesque framework because of its disruptive potential that subverts apartheid morality based on racial and class distinctions, which continue to shape “South African” ways of being. The disruptive potential of slave memory can be compared to the ambivalent relationship that the carnival continues to have with the city of Cape Town .In South Africa it is difficult to discuss the history of creolisation without delving into Afrikaans identities particularly the marginalised “coloured” dimension of it. Despite the claims of purity by the apartheid institutions, the Afrikaans language is without doubt creolised.

In this thesis I examine the Cape Minstrel Carnival as an aesthetic and cultural creation that countered the dehumanising effects of Orlando Patterson’s social death. As Constant-Martin (in Rassool 2010:184) implies, the creation of an annual event such as carnival fought against social death by asserting the “capacity for invention, in other words by affirming their belonging to the human race”. Through dehumanising mechanisms slavery attempted to take away humanity. However, according to Constant-Martin (in Rassool 2010:185) it was through creolisation that slaves could reconstruct a positive self-image despite their marginal status and living conditions. I believe it was imperative to breakdown the relations of slavery in this chapter in order to understand the creole aesthetic of blackface minstrelsy that I subsequently

analyse in chapter three. Chapter one emphasizes as a foundation, the power relations of slavery, this is important because I explore in chapter two the way that fragments of this power dynamic are manifested and exhibited in the carnival's performance in the city. This thesis is concerned with the mobility of slave memory through time and its adaptability and relocation upon a creolised aesthetic, embodied by the Cape Minstrel Carnival.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE CARNIVAL'S ROUTED SENSE OF PLACE IN THE CITY

*Introduction*

The Cape Minstrel Carnival procession in the city begins at the corner of Buitenkant Street and Darling Street, the route is marked with a red line on the map in figure 4. The minstrels parade up to Adderley Street, whereupon they arrive to a barricaded street containing reveling spectators. They march and dance to the top of Wale street, and it is at Buitengracht street and sometimes Rose Street where the procession comes to an end[42]. In this chapter I unpack the significance of some relevant landmarks in the city of Cape Town, which are located within the Minstrel carnival's procession route. The Slave Lodge museum, The Bo-Kaap museum and the District Six Museum are places in the city that hold great significance to the carnival spectators and participants; I examine how the Minstrel carnival's route uses these specific locations to map the city invoking "a sense of place" within the city.

I used Michel De Certeau's essay *Walking in the City* as a theoretical framework for this chapter because it deals directly with the notion of power and how it manifests itself in the

[42] According to Kevin Momberg, the spokesperson of the Minstrel Carnival association whom I interviewed in 2009

dynamics of the city space. I discuss the strategies of exclusion that informed the regulation of the city of Cape Town. In South Africa, the Apartheid government expressed its power through monopolising the city space. The city of Cape Town, like every other city in South Africa inherited the exclusionary ideology of Apartheid. The history of urban formation in South Africa is inextricably linked with that of Apartheid (Dlamini 2009:108). In 1966, the first racially based forced removals materialised from this ideology in District Six (Boraine in Brown 2005:07). The people that perform Carnival in the city largely descend from the same population that was displaced from the city centre in 1966.It is hard to discuss cultural behavior without delving into its culturally appropriate place. The process of representing the city space continues to raise questions about who has the right to inhabit the dominant image of the city (Gottdeiner 2005:144). This often relates to battles over symbolic representations over the city centre.

By unpacking the concept of place, this chapter focuses on the the city of Cape Town, focusing on the way it has shaped and located the procession of the Cape Minstrel Carnival. Place and space are common words that are used daily. English speakers take these words for granted, and use them interchangeably with the assumption that they mean the same thing. However when we critically reflect on the meanings of place and space, by looking beyond our common sense understanding of them, we discover that they are more complex and nuanced. According to human geographer[43] Tim Cresswell (2004), literature on place and space is traditionally at the intellectual core of Geography. However its universal significance and applicability has led to its crossover appeal to other disciplines such as site specific art and performance art. Performance art is interdisciplinary in its construction; since the performance has to "take place" at a specific location the element of place is a component that is critical in its execution. The notion of place is equally important in the performance of the Minstrel Carnival because the performance takes place in a site specific fashion. While the carnival may not fit in seamlessly into the constitution of performance art, in this chapter I employ the dynamic of site specificity in order to explain its influence to the performance of the Cape Minstrel Carnival in the city. The approach adopted in this analysis highlights the important role that the South African state has played and continues to play in the

[43]Human Geography, a subfield in the discipline of geography it is based on the study of places (Cresswell 2004:01).

representation of the city space in Cape Town. It is imperative that I analyse the carnival as a subversive place making event. Place-making is a value laden activity that is based on the symbolic appropriation of space (Cresswell 2004:01). This chapter is about locating the carnival route within the city as a place-making activity.

## 2.1. DETERRITORIALISING ROOTED IDEAS OF PLACE

Deterritorialisation is a concept created by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *Anti-oedipus* (1983). When referring to culture, theorists use the term deterritorialized to refer to a weakening of ties between culture and place. Nikos Papastergiadis (2000) argues that culture is deterritorialised because it is no longer directly linked to specific territories. While many people may still believe that cultures come from or are rooted in specific places, he argues that this is no longer the case, for cultures are fragmented and scattered due to modernisation and globalization. The concept of deterritorialisation moves beyond the false sense of essentialism in relation to place and identity. In this paper, I use the term deterritorialized as a reference to a context of people who have been subject to forced migration, dispossesion in the form of slavery and forced removals in the form of Apartheid's urban reconstruction policies. These events made an obvious cultural impact in the city of Cape Town, for example one could further argue that the procession of the minstrel carnival in effect discloses these violent histories of forced migration, particularly if we consider the significance of its route in the city.

De Certeau (1984) suggests, “In effect the city provides the pen, ink and paper and it is the people who provide the story”. The key question that surfaces is how the carnival procession has the propensity to transform an assumed “neutral” contemporary city space into a historically memorable place. Before I attempt to answer that question, I will begin by distinguishing the difference between space and place. Yi Fu Tuan[44] believes that space and place require each other for definition. In his influential work titled *Space and Place: The perspective of experience,* Tuan discusses place and space as two dualistically separate entities. Tuan (1979:6) emphasizes that, place is security and space is freedom:

[44]Yi Fu Tuan is a Chinese-American geographer famous for pioneering the field of Human Geography

> From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed to place

From Tuan's (1979:06) assertion, it is clear that for him, place is stable and fixed in its composition. In opposition his definition of spaces claims that space is more open because it allows one the freedom of movement. Therefore space is given by the ability to move. Place, on the other hand, is a special kind of object, though not a valued thing that can be handled or carried about easily. I believe Tuan's definition of space has resonance in the twenty first century, were the world is becoming more globalised. Movements are often directed toward, or repulsed by, objects and places (Tuan 1979:17). Spaciousness is closely associated with the sense of being free. Freedom implies space. According to Tuan (1979), it implies having the power and enough room to act. Being free has several levels of meaning, fundamentally it means having the ability to transcend the present condition, and this transcendence is most simply manifest as the elementary power to move. In the act of moving, space and its attributes are directly experienced.

Tuan (1979) believes that in the western world, for instance in North America, space is a common symbol of freedom: "Space lies open, and invites action". The root meaning of the word bad is open. To be open and free is to be exposed and vulnerable. Open space has no trodden paths and sign posts. It has no fixed pattern of established human meaning; it is a blank sheet on which meaning can be imposed. Enclosed and humanised space is place (Tuan 1979:54). Compared to space, place is a calm centre of established values. Human beings require both space and place, venture and shelter, attachment and freedom. When space is thoroughly familiar to us, it has become a place. Interestingly enough, De Certeau's idea on space is in harmony with Tuan's when he states that "Space is composed of intersections of mobile elements" (De Certeau 1984: 117). De Certeau and Tuan's ideas of space and place often lend themselves to be read as disconnected however when they are framed within the dynamics of the city, this is not so. I believe that in the performance of the Minstrel Carnival, space and place are weaved together in a nuanced manner transcending the differences that

supposedly separate them. However it is important that I unpack the element of place and its affinity to the construction of identity before I explain its relationship with space in the city.

The idea of a fixed place explains why many people define and attach their identities to a located place. When we consider John Agnews (1987) three requirements for the transformation of space to place, the practice of territorializing identity starts to make sense. John Agnew contends that for a space to become a place, three requirements need to be met. The most obvious one is the location, something that answers the question, Where? in relation to everywhere else. This gives the impression that all places are stationary, however some theorists argue that places are not at all static but always changing and in transition (Fouberg 2009; Cresswell 2004). The second aspect is a locale, referring to the material form of the place, referring to the actual shape defined by the walls in a room or parks and streets in a city. The third and final requirement is a sense of place, the subjective, personal and emotional attachment people have to a place. Tim Cresswell (2004:7) adds that places must have some relationship to humans and the capacity to produce and consume meaning. When humans invest meaning in a portion of space they become attached to it and convert it into a place. For instance, the act of naming a place or changing a name of a place is one way that reflects an attachment of identity to a place (Lefebvre in Cresswell 2004:10). For example, later on in this chapter I will discuss the significance of the time when the history museum was renamed the Slave Lodge museum. On the other hand, defining and attaching ones identity to place can have adverse consequences because it can be the impetus for reactionary and exclusionary beliefs which at worst are manifested through racism and xenophobia (Cresswell 2004:11).

Taking cogniscence of this bigotry, theorists like Cresswell (2004),Fouberg (2009) and Massey (1994) call for a new conceptualisation that is conscious of the constant movement and flux of people. In her book *Space, Place and Gender*, Doreen Massey (1994) proposes an alternative approach to "places" that is essentially open and hybrid while always provisional and contested. Human movement changes people and the way that they see themselves and it comes in many forms, for example South Africa is currently experiencing human movement predominantly in the form of asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants seeking employment in South Africa. Movement transforms regions and changes place, both the places people leave and the places people go. In this sense movement threatens and challenges

the notion of a fixed place and the safe concept of a territorialised identity (Fouberg 2009:80). The procession of the minstrel carnival in the city, I believe brings together the notions of both space and place as defined by Tuan (1979) and De Certeau (1984). On a simplistic level it is an opportunity for people whom were historically forcibly removed from their homes in the city to symbolically return and claim a stake of their historical identity that has its roots in the city. Furthermore, the fact that "the return" to the city is in a form of a procession gives it a sacred value associated with ritual, when we consider homes as places where rituals take place, it is not far-fetched to regard the minstrel procession as a somewhat home-coming to the city.  However this is not in the strictest sense, because procession importantly allows the freedom of movement and mobility through the city that is in harmony with Tuans (1979) definition of space. So in essence one could argue that the carnival reveals the false dichotomy of space and place.

## 2.2. THE CARNIVAL AND THE CITY

The Minstrel carnival is intimately connected to the people of Cape Town (Meltzer 2010:1). The majority of its participants belong to the working class whom are descendants of the slaves that after emancipation settled within the inner city center. The early history of carnival reflects the creolisation Cape culture. The multicultural attitudes of these communities permitted permeability to new immigrants, ideas and influences which came in successive waves through Cape Town's trading port (ibid). The Cape Town New Year Minstrel Carnival is a long established tradition. It officially dates back to 1907, however its social roots span even earlier, dating back to colonial slavery and the emancipation of slaves in 1838 (Constant Martin: 1997). Carnival is inextricably intertwined with the history of colonial rule, racial prejudice, the segregationist apartheid policies of divide and rule and with the people's responses of complicity and resistance over the centuries. On a lighter note, like most of the Carnivals around the world, the New Year carnival is about a time for forgetting ones troubles for both its spectators and participants. Most importantly in this chapter I emphasize the role carnival plays in reclaiming the city of which its participants dispossessed of.

The city of Cape Town began its expansion as a port city in the 17th century and it was informally referred to as the Tavern of the seas or as the Tavern of two seas[45] (Boxer 1965:273). Cape Town was not only a site for Dutch power and conquest but also for genuine exchange and trade (Worden 1999). This was characterised by the accelerated flux of people, capital, goods and culture (Balshaw and Kennedy 2000:16). Its link to the two seas rendered the Cape a half-way house between Europe and Asia. It became a trade route, a waterway with facilities for loading and unloading ships. As a port city, it brought in flow between the global and the local cultures; it was and still is a site of exchange and constant international comings and goings (Coombes 2003:118). The currency of exchange that has defined port areas like Bristol, Liverpool[46] and the Cape catalysed the process of hybridity. Hybridity and its imaginary implications of contaminating purist[47] identities results from the natural intermingling of different people, it usually considered to threaten essentialist understandings of culture (Phoenix and Owen in Coombes 2000:72). In Cape Town, hybridity naturally took form in the production of new languages, for example the development of Afrikaans (Shell 1994). In culture, for instance, it was manifested in the appropriation of American Blackface minstrelsy performance; I shall unpack the impact of this process later on. In sexuality it created a moral panic that was bound up with racist anxieties. Annie Coombes (Coombes 2003: 118) consolidates that port cities were infamous for causing anxieties around the perceived "threat" of miscegenation. Coombes (ibid) uses the legacy of District six as an example of how the Apartheid government dealt with areas that were threatening to their purist, supremacist ideology. As she writes:

> The language of progress was adopted by the various governments of the day to "deal" with the problems such areas represented were the same rhetoric of slum clearance and public hygiene that the Apartheid government deployed in District six. As a result whole communities were displaced, dispersed and 'resettled' in more "suitable" accommodations (Coombes 2003: 118).

[45]It was known as the Tavern of two seas because it was located at the oceanic crossroads for European ships traversing the Atlantic and Indian Oceans en route to Asia and returning to Europe (Boxer 1965:273).

[46]Bristol and Liverpool share a notorious history as Britain's major slave ports during the transatlantic slave trade (Coombes 2003:132)

[47]Bipolar constructions of black and white have been responsible for notions that people can be 'between two cultures' or 'neither one colour nor the other' and denials that it is possible to have identities which are 'both/and', rather than 'either/or (Phoenix and Owen in Coombes2009:73)

The displacing and dispersing of people through the forced removals of 1966 was in line with the ideological imposition of racial purity. Forced removals were carried out in order to secure the 'sanctity' of territory which resulted from the fear of transgression. According to David Sibley (1999:43), moral panics that catalyse racism articulate beliefs about belonging, and not belonging. They bring boundaries into focus by accentuating the differences between the disgruntled guardians of mainstream values and excluded others. In the occasion of the Minstrel Carnival, these social cleavages are marked by inversions, those who are usually on the outside (the poor cape "coloureds") occupy the centre, and the dominant "whites" are cast in the role of spectators. The Cape Minstrel Carnival exposes the power relations within the city by reversing them, in the process raising consciousness about oppression. The notion of inversion is expanded later in the chapter, when discuss the carnivalesque.

By definition the city space is a modern invention that is a crucible for multicultural exchanges interactions and encounters (Balshaw and Kennedy 2000:11). Based on this premise, the city thrives on difference and diversity. However understanding the distribution and the struggle for power is very important, if we are to unpack the processes that take place in the city (Short 1993:149) Power can be an elusive and phenomenon but it gives itself away in space and one of the most visible ways of exercising power is to occupy and control a space (Tonkiss2005: 60). In Cape Town, a great extent of Dutch power took place through the transformation of the landscape; Boraine (in Brown 2005:07) captures this transformation poignantly in the quote below:

> Familiar streets and buildings now stand on the place where the destruction of the economy and the way of life of indigenous people began 350 years ago, where the first slaves arrived in 1653 and where slavery was abolished 180 years later.

In this chapter, I have chosen to unpack the workings of power in the city using Michel De Certeau's theory on strategies and tactics. De Certeau was a French theorist and in his most influential essay entitled *Walking in the City* in *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), he devised an approach that dichotomised urban dynamics between strategies and tactics. He defined strategies as the force of top- down power exercised predominantly by powerful forces such as the national government, the local municipality, together with urban planners. He believed that these institutional bodies design and delineate the city to be used and

consumed in a specific and specialised way (De Certeau 1984:15). However this intended consumption of space is not always fulfilled, because the hegemony of authority or power is never absolute and in fact it is quite fragile. Particularly in everyday practices, where there can be no full scale revolt, there will be minor acts of resistance and such acts don't need to take a political form (Dlamini 2009:107).

The pavement is constructed for pedestrians to walk on and next to is the street which is constructed for cars to drives on, not the other way around. However on the occasion when disgruntled groups hold protest marches, they are carried out on the streets. Likewise the performance of the Minstrel Carnival is located on the streets of Cape Town. It is relevant to note that despite the fact that Carnival and protest marches subvert the original use of the city streets, they are in fact licensed events with co-operation from their participants and the city authorities. Besides carnivals and protests that mobilises a mass people, individuals subvert these intended functions everyday on a micro level, for instance, by sleeping on public benches, by avoiding traffic lights. De Certeau (1984:19) calls this act of subversion "the tactic", an action which insinuates itself within the space of the other. Urban planners produce representations like maps and street signs, traffic lights in order construct the city and discipline the urban pedestrian and De Certeau is concerned with is the panoptic[48] quality of these representations which controls the flow of movement in the city.

This chapter leans towards a psychogeographic narrative of inner city Cape Town. Psychogeography is the investigation of everyday urban life through artistic means that reveal hidden landscapes of atmospheres, histories, actions and characters which charge environments in profound ways. Psychogeography is relevant to this research because it provides us with new ways of apprehending our surroundings and transforming the familiar streets of our everyday experience into something new and unexpected. Guy Debord was the mastermind of the Situationists movement who coined the term psychogeography, he defined

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Panopticism is an idea developed by Michel Foucault in his influential work entitled Discipline and Punishment (1975). Panopticism claims that in carceral states, society is not maintained by a visible state apparatus such as national guards and state police. He also claims that it is less controlled by shared value systems, but it is controlled by the hidden techniques of discipline and restrained behavior such as self-discipline and self-policing (Foucault 1975)

it "as just about anything that takes pedestrians off their predictable paths and jolts them into a new awareness of the urban landscape". In this thesis chapter I look at the Carnival as the medium of this underlying psychogeographic experience.

## 2.3. THE SPACE OF THE TACTIC AS THE SPACE OF "THE OTHER"

The Minstrel carnival can be analysed as an example of a subversive tactic that interrupts the normal running of space in the city. De Certeau (1984:37) describes a tactic as a calculated action, determined by the absence of a proper locus. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organised by the law of a foreign power' (De Certeau 1984:37). The event of carnival which "takes place" on the streets of Cape Town could be classified as a tactic used by individuals who often lack a proper place or location within the city. This lack of proper place becomes salient when we revise the history the local "coloured" participants, they are a people who have been historically subject to the notorious forced removals of apartheid. De Certeau's use of the term "proper localisation" in the quote below alludes to the idea that tactics are employed by individuals who have been marginalised within the local economy or perhaps their stories are not officialised. If we unpack further the idea of a tactic, we come to understand that tactics tell a story, a "personal" story of space as De Certeau claims. The Cape Minstrel Carnival interpreted as a tactic narrates a bodily experience of space and this is achieved through its corporeal movement of procession, which further suggests collective histories of movement. As De Certeau (1984:96) writes,

> Tactics are used by individuals and have no proper localisation. They are personal rhetorical techniques, in their figurative metaphorical language. They are the poetic, mythic, personal experience of space, the individual mode of reappropiating "urban life".

De Certeau argues for the tactical seizure of space through the lens of marginalised groups. He explains further that tactics belong to "sub-cultural" groups and that they use tactics as artful means to narrate their spatial story in an alternative way. By using the term alternative he consolidates the fact this way of experiencing the city space is not readily officialised. Tactics are ways in which "sub-cultural" groups' intervene and subvert structures of the city in order to make their own space in it. "You need to get down onto the street itself, to get the perspective of the city as most people see it. The pedestrians on the street down below read

the "city as a text"(De Certeau 1984). Similar to the act of extracting relevant information from a book, the performers reconstruct an alternative narrative of the city, and this becomes their personal urban definition of the inner city. Thus each walker intervenes in an urban system his or her own way. These interventions, according to De Certeau (1984) were used by those stereotypically predefined as potentially deviant, through appearance and demeanour. In Cape Town such stereotypes have been attached to the "coloured" working class, who make up the majority of the Minstrel Carnival participants. Their social and economically marginal status renders them subject to even greater levels of authoritative and official stigmatization by the city authorities. This stigma is suggested in an article [figure.7], I extracted from the *Sunday Times* Newspaper on the 20th of December 2009 written by Narisha Davids. Additionally the article *1 Kicked out Minstrels Cry Foul,* serves as a testament to the thorny relationship that the Carnival has with the city of Cape Town.

> There are many issues we have with the city, including the fact that an events coordinator was appointed by the city to control and administer our carnival. People who have been doing it all these years- and you know this is a poor man's sport- we are now being side lined by the city -Kevin Momberg spokesman for the Cape Town Minstrel Carnivals Association. (Davids 2009)

In my interview with Kevin Momberg [figures 5& 6], he repeatedly stated that the participants of the Minstrel Carnival come from the one of the poorest residential areas of Cape Town. And as such he argues they experience marginalization from the city centre in many areas of their lives. Richard Semmet chairman of the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival association echoed the same sentiments as Momberg when he said "People come far to see us now we are being treated like second grade citizens.

In 2010 South Africa hosted the Fifa world cup, this event was many. The article is about the Minstrels being forced out of the Athlone stadium, due to the Fifa world cup[49] preparations, Athlone stadium was refurbished to host training sessions for the World cup teams. After decades of using the stadium as a venue for the minstrel competitions, in 2010 the city refused the Minstrel association permission for its use. Consequently the Minstrels were coerced to hold their events at Turfhall stadium which is a much smaller stadium, inadequate to house

[49]In 2010 the Fifa soccer World cup was hosted by South Africa. Cape Town was one of the host cities (www.fifa.com)

the capacity of its many viewers and participants, this decision was met with hostility from the Minstrel associations.

Traditionally the Carnival competitions were held at the Green Point stadium but the Minstrels had to move after the construction started on the World Cup stadium last year. It is not fanciful to claim that these complaints reported by Narisha Davids are uncannily reminiscent of the same objections that the minstrels were bemoaning during the forced removals of Apartheid. Firstly we have the city officials appointing one their representatives, an outsider to the Carnival, to act as an events co-ordinator for the carnival in order to control and regulate the proceedings of the event. The arrival of the World Cup made significant impact on the proceeding of the carnival. This impact serves as testament to the intertwined relationship that the carnival has with the city of Cape Town. Thus as the city went under construction so did carnival. As one of the World Cup host cities, the city of Cape Town went under construction in preparation for the international games. In the spirit of the international spectacle the Carnival embraced the games by incorporating the flags of different nations as props as one can see in [figure. 10]. In this sense as the city reconfigures itself so does the carnival. This feature of adaptation alludes to the way in which the Carnival has always been in the process of appropriating ideas. These are amongst many traits that which the Carnival both borrows and redefines itself in process and practice. Despite its long and tenuous history in the city, it was only recently on the 5th of June that the Minstrel carnival was officially represented by the Iziko Museums of Cape Town.

A government initiative gave national recognition to fifteen museums and heritage sites in and around Cape Town. The sites now form part of a government consortium called Iziko, which translates to “a hearth” in isiXhosa. Since the hearth of a typical homestead usually occupies the central space Iziko symbolises both a hub of central activity, and a central place, from gathering together South Africa’s diverse heritage (Coombes 2003:119). The Castle of Good Hope Museum, the Slave Lodge Museum and the Bo-Kaap Museum are included in Iziko, however the District Six Museum despite its need to be recognised as a national institution, was excluded from the Iziko organisation.*The Ghoema and the Glitter* is a large scale exhibition that took place at the Castle of Good Hope, built between 1666 and 1679 by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) as a maritime replenishment station, the Castle of

Good Hope[50] is the oldest surviving colonial building in South Africa [figure. 13 & 14]. This event made history as the first ever exhibition in South Africa to cover the historical trajectory of the Minstrel Carnival in Cape Town. The curatorial team consisted Lalou Meltzer, Katie Mooney, Fiona Clayton, Shanaaz Galant and Shamila Rahim, together with Jos Thorne and graphic designer Candice Turvey. The event was well attended; I met John Edwin Mason an American scholar and author of *Social Death and Resurrection, Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa.* Mason has written extensively about the similarities and differences between the history of slavery in the USA and South Africa.The multi- media exhibition was a comprehensive portrayal of the New Year's Minstrel Carnivals. It displayed wide ranging objects such as costumes from the Minstrel troupes; musical instruments played during the procession such as banjoes and Ghoema drums and elaborate Carnival floats as [figure 9].

The exhibition space was overwhelmingly compact with visual objects in every part of the room. There were also audio visual stations by Joelle Chesselet and Lloyd Ross, which featured a range of material including historic and contemporary footage, interview, photographs and paraphernalia. There were many components to the exhibition that one could not experience in one viewing. The exhibition showcased a part of history and culture unique to Cape Town and South Africa. It focused on how carnival participation has been passed on from generation to generation. There was a photographic component of the exhibition that traced the carnival's Minstrel iconographic roots in the United States. The exhibition covered the social origins of carnival, its subversive political implications during apartheid. The catalogue, [figure.27] for exhibition additionally covers a lot of historical material, for example it informs the viewers about the different characters that participate in the Minstrel Carnival outside of the "Coon", such as the Atjas and the Moffies. The Atjas are sometimes referred to as the Red Indians or the Apaches; they have remained a favorite amongst the crowds.

They are adorned with feathered headdresses similar to those of the Native Americans. The Atjas wear scary masks, and sometimes they are accompanied by red devils [figure.16], their role is to scare the little children amongst the audience (Constant Martin 199). The moffie

[50] <http://www.castleofgoodhope.co.za/>

character is also considered an important part of the carnival troupe. Moffies are men dressed in women's clothing who perform in an exaggerated manner cross dressing with humour and self-parody; the role is one of subversion and pushing boundaries. The exhibition did not only revolve around the Minstrels it also included a delightful performance by a Malay choir, dressed in blazers, ties, and fezzes called the Continental Male Choir in figure 15. The significance of carnival as celebration became salient through the musical performances from the District Six Hanover Street Minstrels figure 17. The grand scale of the exhibition seemed to be an attempt to only cover all ground but it also compensated for all the years that the heritage-based museums in Cape Town have arguably turned a blind eye to the oldest community based repository of slave memory within the city, the Cape Minstrel Carnival.

Although the city, throughout the years, has ambivalently accommodated the procession of Carnival on the streets of Cape Town, this ambivalence is also prevalent within the "Coloured" community with regard to their feelings towards the respectability of the Carnival. The detractors oppose minstrelsy, believing that it functions as a shameful, degenerate act of self- degradation which only belongs in the past—a dead past with no relevance in the "free" democratic South Africa. This could be attributed to the collective feeling of shame and guilt associated with this past, particularly in the face of slave legacy reminders such as the annual procession of the minstrels.

> Why do Europeans patronise Coloured Coon Festivals? Because it amuses them and pleases them to think of the coloured people doing what themselves are too proud to do. It gives them superiority over us. And can we blame them for this? No! If you do not participate in the shows, you probably patronise them- you encourage them, you laugh at them; you spur them on to be better at degrading themselves. Not more degrading to the coons but to the coloured people (Constant-Martin 1999:119).

However, when one looks at the demographic appeal of the Carnival, it is, as Richard Semmet suggests, often the poor who have adopted the minstrel procession as their rightful culture, and who even proudly call themselves "coons". In this case, it becomes apparent that the procession of the Cape Minstrels takes on a double meaning, creating a slippage in relation to the past of slavery. Within Freud's (1938) theoretical framework of the uncanny it becomes apparent how the performance of minstrelsy, the product of an assumed dead, unfamiliar, strange slave past takes on an uncanny presence when it comes alive within an assumed

familiar, free society and assumed “democratic” space. The “uncanny is a feeling of fear aroused by uncertainty, for example the uncertainty of whether something is dead or alive, familiar or unfamiliar…[it] leads us back to something long known and once very familiar, yet now concealed and kept out of sight” (Kelley 2004:37). Within the conceptual framework of the uncanny, the annual procession of the minstrels at New Years can be described as the “return of the dead”. As such, the notion of the uncanny complicates binaries and dichotomies such as dead and alive, the familiar and unfamiliar, for and against, negative and positive, past and present, old and new, poor and rich, desire and repulsion, black and white, and the self and other. It reveals how tenuous the boundaries between these classifications are, and exposes the irony of how the creation of minstrelsy undermined the very constitution of racism from which it came.

## 2.4. CARNIVALS AND PROCCESSIONS: THE RETHORIC OF WALKING

Carnival dates back to the Early Modern Europe. The name “carnival” is based on the Italian term *carne levare*, which means the “removal of flesh”, with flesh understood in both alimentary and erotic meanings (Bristol 1985:40). Carnival celebrations varied from one locality to another. The general features of carnival in early modern Europe are similar in many cultural contexts and however they vary with local customs and conditions (Bristol 1985:40).Carnival is often a time of festive abundance and overindulgence. Carnival encourages drunkenness[51], disruptive behavior and symbolic disorderly conduct. Importantly carnival is the occasion for masquerade, disguise and processions, often featuring gender reversals Michael Bristol (1985) interprets carnival as a medium of communication between the centres of power and “the people” as a whole, this communication is done through spectacle, pageantry and public gatherings in the streets (Bristol 1985:41).

The Cape Minstrel Carnival takes place on the second of January every year. When the Carnival participants are asked what the Minstrel Carnival celebrates, many of them will say that they celebrate the ending of the old year and the beginning of the new. According to Bristol (1985) this form of renewal of human society is based on the equality of all community members and it is based on criticism of injustice. The low ranking members of

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[51] Momberg reiterates this point in the interview in page 121

society assume positions of authority and what is normally excluded or despised is temporarily exalted.

Carnival props such as masks are used in rituals of release, and their function is to obscure personal identity. Theorists such as Melucci (in Robinson 2006:07) have debated whether carnival undermines or affirms existing social authority. According to the former, ritualised inversions and battles challenge authorities and propose a new model incorporating those who had been excluded. In the latter view, social authorities permit carnival as a *safety valve,* an outlet for the release of repressed energy or emotion. Carnivals appear to act in the same way as social movements with their emphasis on the symbolic and their ritualisation of protest (Melucci in Robinson 2006:07). Carnivals are employed not only to articulate ideas but also to generate structure to secure and highlight situations and spaces in which central meanings can be reproduced. The idea of carnivals as a form of 'safety valve' allowing the controlled release of social angst and disenchantment (usually within strongly hierarchical societies) is a powerful one. In (Bataille1998) carnivals are ritualised transgressions of the taboo, only ever temporary but occasions that permit societies to explore the realms of the excluded and the forbidden[52]. To what extent such interpretation represent carnivals as radical occasions is quite debatable.

As (Eagleton 1981:148) points out carnival is a licensed affair in every sense, a permissible rupture of hegemony, a contained popular blow-off, in this sense what is apparently “a rupture of hegemony” is usually an officially sanctioned rupture and thus 'ineffectual'. This is evident in the erection of the barricades shown in [figure. 9] on the streets the barricades separate the carnival performers from the participants. The nature of this barricade is ominous, because it marks the potential of an attack, defense and retreat. These barricades define the zone of opposition between the street and the sidewalk, the minstrel and the supporter, and the city and the carnival. Therefore this imposed function creates a new dynamic within the city-scape, it becomes a kind of staged setting with a clear role for each actor and where every movement is directed and monitored (Stallybrass and White: 1986) also consolidate that the feelings of freedom associated with the carnival can seem to be orchestrated moments of

[52]Within the context of the Minstrel carnival it can be argued that the taboo that is brought to the fore by the Carnival is their history of slavery, which to a certain extent has been repressed up until recently.

counter-sublimation and hardly a real threat to political authority. The idea of festivals as limited and permitted transgressions, rather than fixed occurrences of whole scale revolts, emphasize the point that Carnivals exist and resonate within wider contexts and structures. It also reminds us that what once passed for occasions of real struggle, inversion and transgression have since been socially and physically displaced and politically diluted (Bakhtin 1984). For example in the context of Cape Town the processions of the Klopse during Apartheid had greater transgressive impact. Pivotal places such as the Green Point stadium where declared whites only area; this was the traditional destination for the Minstrels. The track in the stadium was the cradle of the carnival competitions; this is an area that the participants were significantly attached to. Marching across the centre of town to the Green Point stadium was forbidden. However these restrictions did not stop the procession instead Carnival members perform carnival no matter what the conditions were. Constant Martin (1999:151) asserts that their obstinacy was evident in the endurance of the Carnival within such a hostile environment. He further claims that this survival quality is expressed in the Afrikaans working class dialect "The coons will never die, in spite of all we have to endure". According to Constant Martin (1999:152), nothing would destroy them, nothing would annihilate their culture, and nothing would kill their community, not even Apartheid (Constant- 1999: 152). When Constant Martin asked individuals "What do the Coons mean to you?" many answered in the following way "My father was in the Coons, I am in the Coons, and my children will be in the Coons." This reply is very interesting because I received the same answer when I interviewed Mr Kevin Momberg the spokesperson of the Cape Town Minstrel Association in 2009. I interviewed Mr Momberg three days before the procession of the Cape Minstrels. I asked him how his involvement with the Minstrels had begun he similarly replied that his great grandfather was a Minstrel all the way to his father to himself and his children are proud Minstrels. It becomes apparent that participating in the minstrel carnival is more than just a public community cultural practice however it also carries a personal meaning for some of its participants. It is personal in the sense that it is a practice that has been woven in to family lineages and passed down from generation to generation ensuring the longevity that it has enjoyed over the centuries.

Robinson (2006:09) claims that festivity seems to accompany various forms of “life crises.” The concept of life crises: is used in a broad sense to include all types of cyclically returning or unexpected events that interrupt, challenge or terminate particular micro/macro sociological spaces, temporalities or identities. In this sense on a micro level, often very short and transitional life crises are provoked by situations of social interaction or by individual trespassing of spatial and temporal limits or boundaries. These short “everyday” life crises can be distinguished from a collection life of crises and result from individual deviation from the norms that define everyday life identities and roles, such as coming of age, falling in love or someone dying. Such crises are challenging in a fairly dramatic way, the ways in which an individual conceives and perceives his or her being in the world and the way in which how he or she is perceived by others. Another form of life crises that is relevant to this analysis, concerns unexpected alterations of the social, economic, ecological and political environment. These events often lead to fundamental and lasting changes in the way that life is organised and conceived. These types of life crises can be provoked by epidemics, natural catastrophes, famine, war and invasion, larger scale immigration, economic crises, technological, geographic, medical and scientific revolutions.

There is no direct cause and effect relationship in such moments of life crises, while they may initiate festivity as events of significance and shared meaning, they can be marked and celebrated (Robinson 2006:10). Carnival emerged from the emancipation celebrations of the slaves in 1838, within this context the event of emancipation qualifies as an occasion that results from the life crises which is slavery. Slavery has not been forgotten by today’s descendants and residents of Cape Town. When they talk of the New Year’s festivals, they very often trace them back to the time when their forbearers were in bondage, they mention the parades that took place when emancipation was proclaimed and they suggest that the forms of rejoicing and the songs which are still alive today were in fact shaped by the experience of slavery (Constant- Martin 1999: 49).

Festivals utilise and transform social spaces. While certain spaces can be specifically recognised and reserved for periodic festivity, it is usual for general spaces to be transformed by festive acts in which they are imbued with the meaning and power of the occasion. Thus

streets which are normally used as thoroughfares for public and vehicular access during the course of daily working hours ; they are cordoned off and reserved for carnival performances. Previous spatial functionalities become hidden and forgotten; signs become meaningless, directions reverse, boundaries cease to be bound and the mundane is decorated and disguised and overtaken by rituals and practices.

The festive practices of eating and drinking, usually contained within restaurants and bars spill over onto the streets and notions of private behavior are similarly made public in defiance, it would seem, of the usual social conventions, though ultimately the controls, if relaxed are usually still in force. The temporary re-alignment and in some cases the reversal of city space and its uses is what (Turner 1988) defines as liminality, moments (time) and places (space) of ambiguity where daily realities are suspended the carnival performer and the spectator share this liminal condition. Not only as something that is transitional and marginal, but also as a time and space that is genuinely creative and desired. Michael Bristol (1985:8) captures the essence of this liminality and transience more elaborately.

The practiced sometimes improvised performances are completely ephemeral. The most intangible "semiotic material of carnival is the organization of the festive crowd itself, which gives to its members an experience of a larger human physicality, where individual human consciousness sharply diminishes and identification with the collective "other" intensifies. Virtually all of this expressive material is entirely evanescent and indeed it is conceived and designed so as to leave no permanent trace. The texts of carnival situate themselves exactly at the frontier between the elite and popular culture, the zone where reciprocal pressure, contamination, and the diversity of speech types and discursive genres is the greatest; it is precisely within these mongrel texts that the repressed or excluded meanings of popular culture become most intelligible (Bristol 1985:58).

Tonkiss (2005:137) expresses that the city is not only to be read as a text, but it is also as a vivid a mobile language to be spoken. He says the city is both a kind of writing and the urban user a kind of reader, and a manner of speaking. Therefore in the process of walking in the city, the walkers invent their own urban idioms and a local language written on the streets. People compose their own images of the city, paths, edges, nodes and landmarks are semantic terms that make up the city as a language or discourse (Tonkiss 2005:137). When the tactical

use of space slips between the cracks of its rational ordering, it means that people are making room for themselves in the city. They are appropriating space and time according to their own design, producing their own version of the city. If meaning is given to the organization of space through practice, it follows that small changes in procedure can provide new interpretations of spatial layouts. Such layouts provide potential commentaries on established ways of doing things and divisions of privilege. Shifting the ground of meaning; reading against the grain, is often something often done through practice through the day to day activities within symbolically structured space. This can involve small things, such as putting something in the wrong place or placing it in relation to something else from what it's normally kept. It can include using space in a different way commandeering space for new uses or invading the space of others processions, the barricading of the street. (Moore in Tonkiss 2005:139).

Moore in (Tonkiss 2005:139) writes about the symbolic transformation of space, the subversion of the symbolic structure in spatial regimes. She alerts us to the minor interventions that disrupt such spatial order, the spatial tactics that unsettle the standard organisation of space. As De Certeau (1984) suggests tactics are simply an assertion of the powerless and marginalised saying "I'm here too" (Tonkiss 2005:142). This subjective imposition on space can work in the same way a synecdoche does; a synecdoche replaces totalities by fragments; it magnifies details in the place for wholes, similarly that is also the way people relate to and remember or imagine space. Memories of place that have been left behind are transformed over time; the fragmentary memories of childhood stand in for a whole that may longer exist. In this sense way people draw their own cognitive maps of the city. The evanescence of the carnival procession to the city is encapsulated in De Certeau's (1984:106) rhetoric of walking where he defines the verb to walk as an action of lacking a place. This should serve to illustrate just how the stories defining space disperse and disintegrate as the pedestrian moves out of a place, for the definition of the city space is similar to walking itself. It holds no single place and it is in no way anchored. In simplified language this means that as you walk through the city you weave spaces in a subjective way, this can never be fixed objectively, say by drawing maps to trace your own journey. To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper place. De

Certeau's walkers reclaim the city space simply by walking through it, in ways that disrupt the intended logic of the urban planners. The Minstrel performers of carnival walk through the city centre in procession, and historically they were forcibly removed from the city displaced from their homes. Their procession through the city centre is a reclaiming of the city space they once lived in, District six. After emancipation most of the slaves moved out of the former master's quarters and settled in District six which is located in the city centre. During the fifties the Apartheid government declared the area a white's only zone. Most of the people who lived in District Six were not white and so they were forcibly removed from their homes in District Six to the Cape Flats, an area located at the margins of Cape Town. From this history the recurring notion of movement and migration is unavoidable in fact it is definitive. This history of movement is alluded to every time that the minstrels walk past historically memorable sites such as District six and The Slave Lodge museum.

> Transgression does not seek to oppose one thing to another...it does not transform the other side of the mirror...into a glittering expanse...it's role is to measure the excessive distance that it opens at the heart of the limit and to trace the flashing line that causes the limit to arise (Foucault in White 1993: 11).

One of the best known features of carnival relates to the concept of transgression of the boundaries and taboos that define social and symbolic everyday life spaces. Carnivals constitute spaces organised by alternate norms of behavior, often linked to forms of exaltation and the satisfaction of erotic desires. This includes a larger permeability of social boundaries, carnivalesque inversion of social roles, the right to meet and dance, the excessive abuse of food, alcohol and drugs and the Rabelaisian misrule and inversion of social mores as examined by in Bakhtin (1984). Carnivals are acts of transgression signifying the symbolic destruction of officialdom and authority. Given the fact that notions of transgression have changed and have become less taboo in the western world no one has to wait for the designated moment of festival in order to violate and subvert the social norms. For example on Friday night many cities in the west on a city space is usually awash with festive and carnivalesque transgressions and challenges to normal and "moral" behavior. However the event of carnival is socially sanctioned and policed occasion, which means it will be mostly organised and symbolic transgressions which will be performed. Despite the potential that carnival has to reproduce power and order it also points out direct connection with social and

political change. In this sense Carnival are privileged arenas of cultural creativity whereby communities can innovate as a means of coping with moments of social crises and as a way of innovating new of being and meaning (Robinson 1996:12). Performances are private and public expressions of ritual serving different groups with differing meanings, allowing people to project images of themselves to their worlds and their audiences. These performances and symbols they mobilize can express a unified collective consciousness or a set of identities and they have the power to transport and communicate and contest systems of apparent common sense.

Carnivals are in a way constructed around particular performances and rituals that facilitate the diffusion of "truths" to a new audience of inheriting generations and interested observers or outsiders. Through performances, traditions as practices informed by rules and rituals of a symbolic nature can be maintained, and histories, whatever their accuracy, can be told and re-told with the regularity of carnival so instilling their values into social life (Zukin in King 1996: 43). According to (Constant Martin 1999) the Coon Carnival has been melted and shaped within the Creole furnace of the Cape. Constant-Martin further claims that in the Cape "coloured" population became the caretakers of the initial creolity. The process of creolisation sheds light into how domination, slavery and segregation bore on human relations and cultural productivity. (Constant-Martin 1999) explains that it allows one to understand how unequal and violent relations affected subordinate groups, how these groups internalised domination while they fought it; in other words, how they struggled with and against oppression

## 2.5. THE SLAVE LODGE MUSEUM ON ADDERLEY STREET

After starting the Minstrel Carnival on Darling Street the Cape Minstrels make their way down towards Adderley Street. Adderley Street which is linked to Government Avenue has some important buildings on its location, such as parliament and the South African National Gallery. More pivotally it is where the Slave Lodge is located, a building that is historically significant to the carnival performers in figure. 11 & 12.The Slave Lodge in Adderley Street, Cape Town was built in 1679 and after the Castle; it is the second oldest existing colonial structure in contemporary South Africa. It was where many of the slaves laboured and it was where most of them lived.  There was a time when the slave lodge doubled as a brothel, and

thus contributed to the growth of the slave population (Trotter 2008:7). It was constructed like a fortress to not only imprison the slaves but to prevent them from escaping. Robert Shell (1994) described it as “A shameless fortress...of human misery” a symbol of isolation. Conditions in the Slave Lodge throughout most of the 17th and 18th centuries were described as dark and damp. The roof leaked, the cellars often flooded and the bedding of the slaves was almost permanently damp. Shell refers to the Slave Lodge as a "demographic sinkhole" in which deaths were excessive, these deaths escalated with the rise the smallpox epidemic of 1755 were 180 slaves died in one day (*ibid*). The negligence of general maintenance and the requirements of decent human living conditions led to several reports around this time condemning the state of the building.

Louis Michel Thibault, inspector of Public Buildings in 1803, described the building as unsanitary, disease-ridden, without appropriate ventilation for fresh air, nor windows for light. Even during the day he was forced to use a lantern to find his way inside the building**.** In 1807, one year after the Second British Occupation of the Cape, all the slaves at the lodge were sold and the British converted the building into their government offices. The building was subject to numerous phases of renovation. By 1716 the Slave Lodge was dilapidated and overcrowded. Proposals for renovations and extensions were put forward and finally, around 1752, a second storey was added. The government offices included the Master's Office, offices of the Attorney General, the Government Secretary, the Receiver of Revenue, the Fiscal, the Bank, the Post Office and the Public Library. In 1815 the Supreme Court was completed and the Legislative Council chamber for parliamentary meetings located into the building from 1827 to 1887. In 1926 the front facade of the building was set back from approximately the island in the middle of Adderley Street to its present position. This was as a result of traffic congestion on the corner of Adderley and Wale Streets.

In the 1930s it was threatened once again with demolition. However, owing to public pressure and campaigning, the building was conserved to become the South African Cultural History Museum in 1966 and the following year it was declared a National Monument. This building has been changed many times and it is unclear how much of the existing building dates from the slave period. While the Slave Lodge is the second oldest building in Cape Town, built in 1679, it stands today as the most visible marker of slavery in the city. However it was only in 1998 that the name of this building was changed from the Cultural History

Museum to the Slave Lodge. It was only in 1998 that the role that slaves played in developing the Cape Colony was fully recognised by the museum[53]. The Dutch East India Company Slave Lodge is unique in the history of South Africa because it was the largest single slave holding in the country (Shell 1999). It gives South Africa the rare opportunity to present something to the world, which can only be visited and experienced locally. The Slave Lodge has been recommended to become the focal point of cultural tourism around Cape Town. Robert Shell (1999) expressed that it has the potential of becoming one of our leading tourist attractions and should be placed on the list of World Heritage Sites. "The Lodge is, in the author's view, the jewel in the crown of all the slave sites in the region" (Shell 2000:18). It has been compared with the site at Elmina[54] in the Gold coast West Africa, "the place of no return", which has been declared a World Heritage site. The Company Gardens, at the top of Adderley Street were initially the VOC vegetable patch to supply passing ships with fresh produce. It is now a decorative garden and a tranquil spot where people walk, sit and relax. Art exhibitions are sometimes held in the avenue (Brown 2005:28)

## 2.7. THE BO-KAAP MUSEUM ON WALE STREET

Adderley Street connects to Wale Street; ascending to the Bo-Kaap residential area, the Cape Minstrels follow this route from Adderley Street into Wale street and this is where their route within the city reaches it end point at The Bo-Kaap (Momberg:2009).The Bo Kaap is connected to the carnival performers because it is one of a few places in the city that Apartheid forced removals were not implemented, which means that families were able to keep their homes, unlike District Six, it was spared the destructive wrath of the Group Areas Act (Coetzee 2009:41)The Bo-Kaap which can be directly translated as upper Cape Town formerly known as the Malay Quarter, has fascinating architecture is made up of brightly

[53]www.iziko.org.za.

[54]The Portuguese built the castle of St George El Mina in 1482, it is where the slaves were detained and tortured before being shipped to the 'New World' .Elmina Castle is one of West Africa's oldest standing buildings; it means 'the mine' in Portuguese. It was also the first permanent structure south of the Sahara built by the Europeans www.pilotguides.com)

coloured houses, picturesque sloping cobbled streets, an area that is one of Cape Town's most significant historical sites. The Bo-Kaap is home to a Muslim community was classified as Cape Malay, whose roots were established hundreds of years ago by ancestors brought to the cape as slaves and political exiles. The Malays were captured by the Dutch on their trade routes during the 17th and 18 centuries mainly but not entirely from a place that is now called Indonesia. The first Malays arrived at the Cape in 1667, but they occupied the Bo-Kaap section of the city only during the 19th century after the emancipation of slaves in 1834 (Brown 2005:104).

The establishment of the Bo-Kaap Museum[55] is dedicated to the people who built the city of Cape Town, but were prohibited from enjoying the fruits of their labour. The Bo-Kaap Museum was established in 1978 and it is situated within CBD on 71 Wale Street, it was furnished as a house that depicts the lifestyle of a nineteenth-century Muslim family.Worden (2001:51) claims there are good reasons for this. Chattel slavery had been confined to one part of the country, the Western Cape. Cape slavery had little to offer South Africans elsewhere in the rest of the country, who were seeking to recapture a past which white rule had denied them. Furthermore, in the Western Cape itself slavery was also seen as divisive; a history which 'in the struggle' separated their brothers and sisters, who descended from indigenous inhabitants of the land (Worden 2001:52).In the past few years, however, the Cape's slave heritage is beginning to be represented in ways which reflect the new realities of the post-apartheid era. On the contrary the history of slavery does have a lot to offer national history, particularly because historically, it forms the foundation in the inception of modern day South Africa.

## 2.8. THE DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM ON BUITENKANT STREET

When the buses arrive in droves to the city centre carrying the Minstrels who live outside of the city, they drop of their performers between Buitenkant Street and Darling Street. The Cape carnival procession begins from this location. This location, like Adderley Street and Wale Street carries great historical significance to the historical beginnings of Minstrel Carnival within the city.The emancipation of slaves in 1838 led to the definite shift within the spatial

[55]I visited the Bo-Kaap museum in January 2010

arrangement of the city. Ironically the compensation money that was provided by the British government after the emancipation of slaves was not given to the victims of exploitation, but it was given to the disgruntled slave owners, appeasing them after suffering a financial loss from emancipation in 1838 (Ross 1985:116). In turn this money was invested by the former slave owners into real estate in the city. Once they were fully free the ex-slaves left their ex masters property premises and headed for the inner city. They had limited income and so the former slave owners took advantage of the situation by developing slum areas located at the city centre where they rented out rooms. The ex-slaves moved alongside their friends and their kin who had been free before 1838.

A large number of ex-slaves migrated to Cape Town from the country side and consequently the overcrowding at the city centre escalated (Ross 1985:116). A building boom occurred in District six, the Malay quarter now called the Bo-Kaap on Signal hill was built during this time and put out to rent. The profits that the slave owners once gained from the laws of slavery were now replaced by the strict laws of capital and the housing market. In an uncanny way, the ex-slaves could not escape the grip of their ex-masters. In the absence of building restrictions, buildings were erected without water, sewerage or proper sanitation (ibid). These shoddy structures were jumbled together between narrow alleyways, were street gangs and slum lords would loiter. The living conditions remained very poor, and over-crowding worsened. Most houses were very small, some consisting of only one room housing as many as 16 people. District six was located near the city centre. District six became renowned for being a multi-racial vibrant community and a cultural hub for the working class community, a community which had strong connections to the Minstrel Carnival (Ross 1985:116).

The District which started its existence as home to freed slaves and grew into a multi-functional urban residential sprawl by the end of the 1940's. Plans for the re-development of the Cape Town took shape in the 1930s and included the idea of destroying District Six. “Control” had become a feature of urban planning and shows clearly how the spatial concepts prevalent in town planning at the time fitted neatly with the nationalist political ideology (ibid). The infamous Group Areas legislation of 1950 led to the forced removal of about 150,000 people from “unplanned” residential areas in the town centre, including District

6(Soudien and Meyer 1998). In 1966 the Apartheid government under the National Party declared District 6 to be a “white” group area” so enabling them to destroy all buildings, except religious ones, on the grounds of 'slum clearance' (ibid). Politicians of the ruling party maintained that the area was squalid and “dangerous” environment and ridiculed Coloured leaders who foresaw the destruction as a tragedy. Most of the residents of Districts Six were relocated to racially segregated municipal townships such as Khayelitsha and Gugulethu built near industrial estates and the Cape flats. The humiliation of the removals had profound social consequences Approximately 60,000 people were removed from District Six itself, at a cost of more than 30 million rand. Two thirds of the residents were moved to the Cape Flats an area racially designated for the “coloured” populations. The housing provision was insufficient and there were 24,000 people on the municipal waiting list by the early 1970s (Soudien and Meyer 1998). The psychological and emotional wrench experienced by the residents of District Six is well expressed in poetry and prose that is displayed at the District Six Museum today. District Six became probably the most potent symbol of the destruction and alienation that Apartheid did to families and indeed to whole communities. The buildings were systematically bulldozed throughout the 1970s, and by 1982, almost all evidence of the district had been destroyed (ibid).

The collective identity of the city was fractured through these forced removals this relates not only to the human and physical geography but to the subjective sense of place of its inhabitants which was deliberately and systematically altered. The radical act of Apartheid urban restructuring materially and socially tore down extended families and neighborhoods built up over four or five generations. The rupturing of community networks was socially devastating for all the residents. According to Delport (2001:39) the motive was to not only obliterate but to reinvent the place on a different basis. The state coined palatable terms and euphemisms that served to justify their inhumane acts to the public. The rhetoric of progress and public hygiene lightly thinly veiled the crude reality of forced removals. Delport (2001:40) further explains that the blotting out and replacement of settled urban communities, once integral parts of the city, was further weakened by official phrases which denied the reality of the experience of human displacement through the use of terms such as “slum clearance”, “community development” and “social upliftment”. These official acts

abetted by the Cape Town City council, made the recollection, the naming and the reinterpretation of these events an urgent necessity in order to counter the erosion of historical remembrance ( Delport in Rassool 2001:39). District six remains to this day , an urban scar that continues to stir the half memories of the nation, District six retains its role in contemporary South Africa as a symbol of the will to remember (Delport in Rassool 2001:40).

According to Svetlana Boym (2001) , the conceptual framework of place and displacement, belonging and separation, loss and return, go beyond the physical and the social. For instance, what happens when we explore the yearning that remains once an actual place in all it fullness is gone? Can the loss ever be reversed, or is the reality of dispossession too complex and final for it to be recovered in concrete and social terms? Edward Said (1993), Annie Coombes (2003) Svetlana Boym (2001) and Jacob Dlamini (2009) write about the notions of nostalgia, reflection and restoration. What do we mean when we speak of "return", do we mean that literally, or do we mean we must restore ourselves to ourselves, is there any place that's fits us, together with our accumulated memories and experiences (Said 1993:33) District Six is remembered very "fondly" as a place of hardship, but a tolerant and mutually supportive community that enjoyed lively entertainment. What does it mean for former District six residents to remember their lives under apartheid fondly? These sentiments are discomforting, because they challenge the master narrative of redemption and overcoming that is at the heart of South Africa's struggle history. These sentiments bring to the fore the complexity of life under Apartheid, where the line between resistance and collaboration was always tenuous one (Dlamini 2009:16).

## 2.9. THE DISTRICT SIX MUSEUM AND NOSTALGIA

The District Six Museum [56] located on 25 Buitekant Street, was established in 1994. It provides a tangible space for bringing together a community displaced by apartheid. This is

[56]The District Six Museum is located on 25a Buitenkant Street Cape Town. Although the Museum was initially started as a community space for ex residents to gather and meet, it has now become a space that tells the story of District Six to both local and foreign visitors to Cape Town and South Africa. The museum has been designed in such a way that a visitor can wander in off the street and take a self-guided tour, but more importantly a visitor can also make use of the privilege of taking a tour with an ex resident of District Six .<http://www.districtsix.co.za:/>accessed on 7 November 2010

achieved through educational programmes, collections and exhibitions. The District Six Museum provides a voice for the stories of those displaced and dispossessed by apartheid-era forced removals. One of its mandates is a commitment to the reconstruction of the community by advancing a culture of multi-culturalism, non-racialism and open debate around such issues (Soudien and Meyer 1998). The notion of a museum, with its connotations of a static, frozen collection of display underpins the reason why its founders aspired to create a living space, not a monument but a place conducive to working with memory (Delport in Rassool 2001:11). In 1994 an old Methodist Church at 25A Buitenkant Street was refurbished and transformed into the District Six Museum. The museum was officially open in 1994 and it functions a as a repository of the memory of District Six's past (Rassool 2001:07). *Recalling Community* is an important book that came out of the process; it is about the history, the cultural work and the on-going thinking process on the part of the District Six Museum. The book is written by its staff, founders and trustees, it is meant to communicate the insider's view of the museum to the public. The notion of recall is emphasized to refer to the memory work on District Six and the fundamentals of restoring and healing the community of District Six (Rassool 2001:11).

The museum tells the story of District Six through exhibitions and collections. According to Ciraj Rassool one of the main issues that emerged in the construction of the museum was the ambivalence that would exist between the category of "museum" and "exhibition" (Rassool 2001:8). When the museum was formed, the foundation trustees grappled with the idea of approaching it as strictly museum space. They believed the idea of a museum was limited in expressing their specific commitments. It was restrictive in the sense that museum space assumes to be neutral in the discourse of tourists it is also restricted in terms of viewership diversity. By acknowledging this limitation the founders placed importance in developing a community museum that would be a space of contestation and dialogue. They had a vision of a space that would be multidisciplinary in its engagement and interactive with the community, as opposed to a stagnant, fixed environment of the traditional museum, where people come to view collected artifacts. In Ciraj Rassool (2001:8) words:

> The mission the District Six museum was not to network with other museums, but to mobilize the masses of ex-residents and their descendants into a movement of land restitution, community development and political consciousness.

The museum emerged as a community based independent non-government organisation (Coombes 2003), unburdened by the baggage of old collections and outdated museum classificatory systems. This means that the museum is not reliant on government funding therefore it does not face the pressure to conform to state authorities[57]. However at the same time the museum does see itself as having national significance. It was constructed at a time when heritage transformation was being identified as the first step towards democracy, hence the museum created a context were the process of transformation could be take place with regards to the dynamics of national heritage (Rassool 2001:8). For the museum foundation and its trustees the idea of transformation took form in more than one way. The traditional notion of the museum was challenged firstly by incorporating other disciplines. By intervening in the field of cultural representation the process of theatre, annunciation and performance became the life blood of the museum's work, these ephemeral processes as some might describe them, gave the museum its distinctive curatorial flavour (Rassool 2001:9).However, it is worth noting that, the museum's commitment to recalling community through memory has the potential to create problems when reminiscing leans towards nostalgia. This comes across in the stories of living in District Six as an idyllic, harmonious environment immune to political tensions and personal antagonisms (Layne in Soudien and Meyer: 1998). The nostalgia that produces this image of District six also serves to undermine the bureaucratic language of sanitation and public hygiene deployed by the apartheid demolition teams that so ruthlessly and effectively masked the more positive human aspects. It seems then, that a certain kind of nostalgic memorializing may serve important (Coombes 2003:124).

[57]Despite the overwhelming evidence of local, national and international interest, the District Six Museum receives a minimal government grant, whereas Robben Island snapped up 80 per cent of the government grant, "for arts and cultural and heritage institutions" in 1998. In 1996 the museum received R200, 000 a measly amount, compared to the R1, 2 million that the Voortrekker Monument museum received and the R801, 000 given to the Afrikaans language museum. Hopes were high after following the election of Mandela's government; however their hopes were dashed the, discrepancy in the kind of heritage projects in which the government was prepared to invest. As a result of poor government funding, their finances rely heavily from external foreign agencies to survive as an institution. While a greater degree of autonomy from state funding enables a critical distance and independence, this "freedom" inevitably comes at a cost (Coombes 2003:119).

In *Native Nostalgia* Jacob Dlamini (2009:16) points out that today, nostalgia could be interpreted as “a sentiment of loss and displacement”. According to Boym (2001:7) the spread of nostalgia has to do not only with dislocation in space but also with the changing conception of time. Boym describes modern nostalgia[58] as the mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of the enchanted world with clear borders and values. However interpreted within the context of District Six nostalgia is employed in the process of recalling and bringing together community displaced by Apartheid from the city. Svetlana Byom (2001:41) refers to the two types of nostalgia as not absolutes but rather as tendencies. She describes them as restorative and reflective (Boym 2001). Restorative nostalgia puts the emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance. Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in the dreams of another place and another time. It is important to consider the roles nostalgia might serve in the remembering of District Six. I believe that the District Six Museum uses the methods of restorative nostalgia in the process of recalling community; this is evident in their permanent installations such as *Streets: retracing District six* is multi-disciplinary installation which launched the District Six Museum, it eventually becoming a permanent fixture in the museum. The map painting on the floor shows the street network of District Six before it was demolished. It was designed as a receptive surface covered with a strong transparent plastic

[58]The word nostalgia comes from two Greek roots, yet it did not originate from ancient Greece. Boym (2003) states that nostalgia is a pseudo Greek word, or nostalgically Greek. Contrary to popular belief nostalgia comes from medicine, not from poetry or politics. Among the first victims of the newly diagnosed disease were Swiss mercenaries, students studying away from home, domestic servants working abroad various displaced people during the seventeenth century? Svetlana Boym (2001:3) the symptoms of nostalgia ranged from the ability to see and hear ghosts, nausea, and loss of appetite, brain inflammation, and cardiac arrest to a high fever. Sufferers were prone to suicide. The patients acquired “a lifeless and haggard countenance”, and an indifference towards everything,” confusing past and present, real and imaginary events. On the good side was that the disease could be cured by, leeches, warm hypnotic emulsions, opium and a return to the Alps soothed the symptoms. On the other hand the nostalgic had the amazing capacity to remember everything for remembering sensations, tastes, sounds, smells, the minutiae and the trivia of lost paradise that those who remained home never noticed (Boym 2001). Gastronomic and auditory nostalgia were of particular importance. Returning to the motherland was prescribed as the best remedy for nostalgia. For Hofer, nostalgia was a demonstration of patriotism of compatriots who loved their native land to the point of sickness. By the end of the eighteenth century, doctors discovered that returning home did not always treat the symptoms of nostalgia (Boym2001:06). According to Boym (2001) nostalgia was based on a sense of loss, not limited to personal history. Such a sense of loss does not necessarily suggest what is lost is properly remembered and that one still knows where to look for it.

layer. Ex-residents were encouraged to mark in coloured pens the memories of people and events, names of omitted streets and lanes onto the surface (Delport in Rassool2001:36).

This installation was open to the inclusion of the public but it specifically targeted the ex-residents and their descendants as collaborators [figure. 19].It was constructed out of materials and residues from the District Six site, such as street name signs as well as memorabilia and documents such as photographic albums and oral histories of families who lived there. Importantly it was interactive open in the process of visual construction (Delport in Rassool 2001:34). The streets of District six are a significant place for its residents because they represent community life. Thus, the streets can be interpreted as a window of communal life and a symbol of a shared space has a great significance because it alludes to a major part of the loss of experienced by the residents after the removals (Delport in Rassool 2001:34). The streets are also the home of the Cape Minstrel Carnival, they are the place where the performers and the audiences interact in the process it brings together the community. The exhibition attempted to recreate this communal space by using the floor space as a display surface. “Ex-resident families would come and view images and debate over street names of where they used to live” (Le Grange in Rassool 2001:07) According to Soudien and Meltzer (2001), the phenomenon of the street as a home is pivotal to District six’s identity narrative. One may ask why streets, as opposed to interiors? It is significant that the location of District Six was the city’s abode for the poor. Interiors as subject matter for South African artists emerged and were exclusive to the middle class. Soudien and Meyer (2001:71) explain further that the

> The street was the place where people’s identities were confirmed and where they affirm their belonging. It is a place where they show themselves as member of the community. The street was a medium through which meaning was offered and negotiated

Consequently, the street was transformed into a mobile place, bound up in the expression of one’s neighborhood .This can be attributed to the fact that homes were cramped due to over-crowding and closely knit living quarters, therefore the street became a gathering place, sometimes by choice and often by necessity. Soudien and Meyer describe a typical scene from District six below

> Houses overlooked the street and produced an intimate sense of urbanity, exchanges of early morning salutations from your home window. Community meant being part of the swish and the swirl of the street parade. The residents were accustomed to sleeping with their windows open doors unlocked; children did their playing in the streets. Hours were spent watching the minstrels around New Years, running from house to house, and merging with neighboring families.

The street activity which became synonymous with District Six is depicted in [figure.18].The distinction between the public and the private was less pronounced rendering a blur, between the street and home (Soudien and Meltzer 2001:72).Indeed nostalgia has a sense of future- for an experience however imaginary, of possessing the means of controlling the future, which may function as a powerful force for social reconnection (Coombes 2003:125). The museum proposes nothing less than a utopian moment and by implication, future. Perhaps also nostalgia is a necessary stage in the "owning of painful and difficult memories that may involve callusion with Apartheid bureaucracy or other smaller and larger betrayals. It is useful to think about the District Six Museum project in terms of three concepts than also be used as metaphors, remiscense, excavation and reconstruction" (Coombes 2003:125).

Certain recurring themes that are pertinent Boym's notion of restoration have been noted in the museum space, recurring phrase being that of the "spirit of the District "community life and sharing. The yearning for restoration does not simply mean a literal return to the physical place, what is remembered cannot be reconstituted. Rather a need is expressed for recalling the experience of those who were dispossessed and acknowledging responsibility for those acts. When people speak about District Six as not gone nor forgotten and that District Six is no longer here (in its original place) but it still exists out there, it refers to the resilience of the human spirit and affirms a non- material notion of place. If one of the legacies of Apartheid era is the alienation of the individual and communities from their own histories- so much so that the aspects of those histories are either ignored through disinterest or willfully exploited for other ends and in the process destroyed- then the case of District six is an important exception. Like its neighbor District six has been the locus of public debates, heritage, commemoration, memory and nostalgia. District six has assumed an iconic status, in the ways

that it references the dehumanizing instances of forced removals that were the critical part of Apartheids master plan (Coombes 2003:117).

One significant feature of the symbolism of District Six is that of the human potential for coexistence as it was known there. People of many cultures, political groupings and religions lived together in mutual acceptance and cosmopolitanism (Delport in Rassool 2001:42). There was a sense of belonging, a sharp urban inclusivity, becoming more than a geographically defined area. The focus is in those dimensions of memory, where memory is not seen as anchored in a nostalgic past, but rather sharpening insights and informing arguments of current social issues.

*Conclusion*

The notion of place can no longer be taken for granted as simply the background to, or a neutral container for, actions, events and experiences but it has to be seen as a dynamic player, requiring detailed analysis of its role in the complex weave, linking society, culture and history. Performance has a spatial dimension in that performers and spectators have to be present together for the duration of the performance, the point is that the performance must literally take place, that is be located somewhere (McAuley 2008:15). Carnival processions are outside of traditional performance venues, their performance sites are marked by their own histories of movement. This means that the performers and the spectators experience these places in new ways that highlight political issues that seem to be an inevitable consequence of being in place. The reality of place brings with it issues of ownership and these in turn involve issues of power, rights (exclusion and inclusion), and multiple, often conflicting histories of occupation and exploitation. The role of place triggering and holding memory, is significant in relation to the nature of the Cape Minstrel Carnival's performance involved in the process of remembering and forgetting

Places raise questions about memory and about group and individual identity. Who we are is intimately bound up with where we are and where we come from, therefore performing in place brings to the fore the nature of inhabitation what it means to live in/with a place and what it means to be inhabited by a place. Place has always been a fraught issue in South Africa.South Africa is a nation whose recent past has been marked by trauma. The procession of carnival in the city recalls the somatic nature of trauma as opposed to narrative memory,

due to its politics of power.The Cape Carnival's place in the city comes alive through its performers and spectators, they embody and enact memory. The body in this historically loaded space comes to know its relation to the past. The temporary and corporeal engagement of spectators at the carnival procession space are integral components at the staging of cultural memory (Hill and Paris 2006:130) In a sense there is a pilgrimage component to visiting the locations of trauma such as the Slave lodge Museum of which is part of the Carnivals route through the city. The choice of events dating from a past of slavery, colonialism and Apartheid has led to reflections on the ways in which South Africans as a society deals with sites of past trauma, and these sites of recent trauma are positioned so they will (or will not) enter into collective memory. This brings to the fore the fact that remembering and forgetting are politically charged acts; the issues involved are not simply of interest only to professional historians and academic but are central to moral controversies in the present and they raise questions that go to the crux of national identity and national pride, or indeed national shame (Mc Auley 2008:152)

The memory of slavery persists through the performance of Carnival despite the fact that it was "officially" forgotten. It persisted precisely because of the attempt that was made to forget and supress it. The momentum of the Cape Minstrel Carnival from its inception till today has remained intact even after "official" attempts to stifle it. The uncontrollable momentum of Carnival in South African history in many ways responds to the official silence. Sites such as the Slave Lodge Museum and the District Six Museum make a positive impact as far marking memory is concerned. Reflecting on the role that landscape plays in the retention and circulation of memory, it is not far-fetched or fanciful to see the city itself as bearing witness to the traumatic event of Slavery and Apartheid that occurred. The city has continued to somehow carry this memory through certain structures and routes. If we read the city as a text, then the act of walking the city streets reveals a spoken meaning, this process is brought to life by the procession of carnival. The carnival route in the city undermines the conspiracy of silence and the cult of "national" forgetfulness that has characterised officially approved history throughout most of the twentieth century. Traumatic events leave traces that are not just material and the removal of the material traces does not mean that the event has necessarily been erased from collective memory (McAuley 2008:152). Knowledge that was

suppressed during the generation of apartheid is emerging in a significant way in contemporary democratic South Africa. Because stories are associated with specific places therefore the place becomes the actual repository of memory rather than the short lifespan of individuals.

## CHAPTER THREE: THE PERFORMANCE OF A CREOLISED CARNIVAL

### *Introduction*

In chapter one I discussed the historical framework under which the trajectory of creolised cultural production took form in Cape Town. Chapter two framed the Carnival's street route in the city, as form of urban mapping, highlighting significant historical landmarks within the city, such as the District Six Museum and the Slave Lodge Museum and the Bo-Kaap Museum. In chapter three, I examine the performance of creolisation and how it manifests itself visually in the Cape Minstrel Carnival. The creolisation of carnival is embedded on a shifting multiplicity of layers that continue to translate into diverse readings and interpretations. However, in this analysis, I will largely focus my attention on the controversial motif of the "coon", as it is part of the creole imagery embedded in the performance of carnival. The "coon" is a motif in carnival, wrapped up in ambiguity and ambivalence, and in this chapter I explore some of the reasons that it has become a symbol of notoriety and celebration.

The archetype of the "coon" is at the core of American blackface minstrelsy, and like the Cape Carnival it has its social roots in slavery. Some authors, such as Gubar (1997) and Lott (1992) have gone to the extent of claiming that blackface minstrelsy is simply a cultural replica of the slave-master relationship. Certainly in America, the image of the "coon" is inextricably linked to the negative stereotyping of people of African descent. That is why when American tourists visit Cape Town, they are horrified to hear local performers of carnival use the word "coon", when referring to themselves. This shock stems from the fact that in America, the term "coon" is offensive; it is a word that has a racist connotation. It is believed that the disapproval of tourists to the casual use of this word could have influenced

the local government in Cape Town in its renaming the Coon Carnival to the Cape Town Minstrel Carnival (Constant-Martin in Coetzee and Nutgall 1998). In that regard the renaming of "coon" to the euphemistic, politically correct "minstrel" could be interpreted as a gesture of accommodating the sensitivities of American visitors, seeing as the word minstrel has a particular history in the USA (Cockerell 1997).

Constant-Martin (1999) claims there is a deviation and subversion of this meaning when it is rendered in the Cape Minstrel Carnival. Local participants of Carnival still proudly call it the Coon Carnival or Die Kaapse Klopse which is the Afrikaans translation of The Cape Clubs (Martin 1999:158). According to Constant-Martin (1999) in South Africa the understanding of a "coon" has shifted and come to signify the main character and mask in the New Year festivals. Therefore when the participants of the Kaapse Klopse speak of themselves in English and in Afrikaans, they refer to themselves as "coons"' and many do so without the knowledge of its derogatory meaning in the USA.

However in spite of that the ambivalence persists, for instance when one looks up "Cape Minstrel Carnival" in the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary, you will find the definition "another term for Coon Carnival" (Kavanagh 2002 :168). When you look up "Coon Carnival", (Kavanagh 2002:253), it is defined as " A parade of Cape minstrel troupes held in Cape Town etc…although the term Coon Carnival is widely used, the term Cape Minstrel is preferred." Right above the definition of the Coon Carnival, the definition of a "Coon", and it is defined as "another term for a Cape Minstrel", or a shortened name for an animal a racoon found in North America, which is where the term came from. The third definition classifies it as an informal offensive word for a black person. In this chapter I shall be discussing these different meanings and their relationships to each other.

For many Capetonians the procession of the annual Cape Carnival marks their highlight of the year. For other Capetonians it is the ultimate "cultural cringe", for feelings of ambivalence are bound up in the reception of the "coons", in South Africa (Constant-Martin 1999) (Meersman 2011). Some believe that this ambivalence is divided along class lines. For some members of the "Coloured" educated elite, especially during the development of the slum conditions of District six in1948, Carnival was seen as a display of "undignified and degrading" behavior

(Meersman 2011:06). Since then till now one of the enduring negative stereotypes of the Cape Carnivals is that it is connected to gangsters (Meersman 2011:6).Detractors believe that the carnival reinforces white prejudices regarding so-called “the uncivilized nature of coloured people” (Constant-Martin 2000:366). Members of the elite denigrate it as a pseudo cultural activity that gives people a false identity (Constant-Martin 2000:366). Detractors question whether Cape “coloured” identities should be embraced and celebrated in the manner of the Minstrel carnival. In more ways than one, the ambivalence and mixed reception of carnival is also in subtle ways bound up in the image of the “coon” as a cultural marker. In this chapter, I am interested in deconstructing the performance “the coon”, as an inversion ritual deeply embedded in the carnivalesque. The so called “objects” of these stereotypes as much as they were denied agency, found gaps and cracks where they could subvert the stereotypes. At times the subversion was so subtle, that it could be masked or interpreted as complicity and expediency. I explore some of the contemporary forms of visual culture and performance that reference imagery of carnivals. Such as Claire Tancons's 2009 Cape 09 procession *“A Walk in the Night”* and Anthea Moys's *Deurmekaar* at the Goodman Gallery in Cape Town. I expand this analysis, to include the contemporary use of “Coon” imagery in the works of the South African by Anton Kannemeyer.

## 3.1. BLACKFACE MINSTRELSY: A CULTURAL REPLICA OF THE SLAVE MASTER RELATIONSHIP

Blackface minstrelsy is an American performance practice that was crystallised during American slavery. The exact date of its conception is unknown but numerous sources such as John Strausbaugh (2006) the author of *Black Like You: Blackface, Whiteface, Insult & Imitation in American Popular Culture* and Dale Cockerell (1997) who wrote *Demons of Disorder Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World* agree that it began in the late 1830's as a genre of performative entertainment. Minstrelsy inaugurated the practice of displaying 'blackness' for the edification and consumption of white viewers (Strausbaugh 2006:36). According to Eric Lott (1992), blackface minstrelsy became a social and cultural manifestation of the slave master relationship, where so-called authentic “blackness” was defined by the white master. Due to the need for survival slaves accepted this, at least on the surface, and subverted distorted definitions of themselves (Gottschild 1996:84).

At the beginning of this phenomenon, the performers of the blackface minstrel show where exclusively white Americans, who were lower working class (Cockerell 1997). The performers would "mimic" and lampoon African Americans in stereotypical and disparaging ways (Gubar 1997; Lott 1992; Strausbaugh 2006; Cockerell 1997; Gottschild 1996). This was during a time when white male Americans were the masters of black slaves (*ibid*). In his enlightening essay, *Love and Theft: The Racial Unconscious of Blackface Minstrelsy* , Eric Lott (1992:23) suggests that this was because the minstrel show was organised around the explicit "borrowing" of black cultural materials for white dissemination and profit, a borrowing that ultimately depended upon the material relations of slavery (Lott 1992:23). What Lott is suggesting is that blackface minstrelsy became a cultural manifestation of the master-slave relationship of exploitation, where the master exploits the slave's labour without compensation. The minstrel show obscured this relationship by "pretending" that slavery and exploitation were amusing, right and natural (Lott 1992:24). In his essay titled *Racism and Objectification: Reflections on Themes from Fanon*, Richard Schmidt (1996) unpacks the act of pretence and the interesting ways that it underpins the condition of racism and object hood. I shall discuss his ideas after explaining how blackface in America objectified black bodies on the minstrel stage

In the United States and in South Africa, on the surface level, the idea of race was based on phenotype and physical appearance, with the emphasis being on skin colour. Therefore racism has been commonly understood as a visual ideology. Somatic features were believed to provide the crucial criteria for membership. Coombes (2000:3) expands on this idea by asserting that, racism is not only a visual ideology, instead the physical attributes only signal the non-visual distinctions of exclusion of which racism is hinged. In the performance of blackface in America, the visual dimension of race was caricatured and became inextricably linked to the negative stereotyping of the "exclusion" that Coombes refers to. Yancy (2008:149) points out that within this racist ideology, the white subject is more familiar with the role of a person who sees than of the person that is being seen; the black object. In this racially saturated field of visibility, the black person is gazed upon, the objectifying dimensions of the white gaze, assumes the position of the white gazer as the knowing subject,

the gazed upon black body becomes the known object (Yancy 2008:149). Within the performance of blackface, this heightened racial visibility is emphasized and exaggerated.

Hence, when white males performed blackface, they wore costumes which included the of blackening of their faces with burnt cork or black polish representing the dark skin of African as depicted in figure 20 (Gubar 1997) (Strausbaugh) (Lott 1992) (Cockerell) (Gottschild 2003). Blackface became a theatrical make-up style used to reference the countenance of the iconic racist archetype[59] that of the "coon". To perform the character of a "coon", white performers would exaggerate their lips with red lipstick in a manner resembling the painted lips of a circus clown. Sometimes they would use white paint instead red lipstick. White gloves and colourful tailcoats completed the transformation. When performing black face minstrelsy, the performer would speak in Ebonics[60] an African-American dialect deriving from the word ebony (black) and phonics (sound). The typical minstrel show would consist of songs and dances with the accompaniment of banjos and tambourines, and the performers would re-enact stories that revolved around "authentic" plantation life.

Slaves were infantilized, and Schmidt (1996:37) suggests infantilization is one of the key facets that underpin the process of racism. Viewed as children or incompetent adults they were thought to be amusing. Their childlike incompetence invited ridicule, similar to the ways in which children are automatically regarded as humorous (Schmidt 1996:37). Therefore, the character of the "coon" was constructed as childlike, chronically lazy, buffoonish, immoral and poor. "Coons" were portrayed as having an insatiable appetite for fried chicken, watermelons and Kool-Aid. The underlying subtext of these paternalising stereotypes was the belief that black people were happy in their state of servitude. According to George Yancy (2003:165) "They [white people] saw what they wanted to see, genuine happy darkies, fixed in their being and satisfied with their lot". Yancy (2003:165) further consolidates his point, by

[59]Apart from the coon motif, there were other recurring archetypes that were in the minstrel show such as the mammy and Mandingo Negro (Strausbaugh 2006).

[60]The term Ebonics was created by a group of black scholars. It is the linguistic feature which represents the communicative competence of the West African, Caribbean, and United States slave descendants of African origin. It includes various idioms, patois, argots and social dialects of black people, especially those who have adapted to colonial circumstances (Williams 1975).

illuminating that this type of blackness was after all was from the perspective of the white gaze which was based of white myths:

> What we want is grinning, dancing idiots, so we simply manufacture them. We then notice that these folks seem to be grinning dancing idiots, and justify our own racism out of our own invention (Yancy 2003:165).

These white manufactured blackface stereotypes became notorious and made up the generic imagery of "blackness" that was ubiquitous and commodified in comics and in various media, such as the Warner bros cartoons, Hollywood, Robinson Crusoe, Gulliver's Travels and the Tin Tin comics as shown in figure.20, 21& 23 (Strausbaugh 2006:54).Such stereotypes became a fixture in the minstrel stage, because they bolstered the most cherished attitudes that some white Americans held about people of African descent at the time. When these stereotypes were internalised these images implicitly and explicitly denigrated "black" people because they are based on the assumption that "black" people are naturally defective. Anton Kannemeyer is an example of contemporary South African artist, who quotes this notorious racist imagery in his artistic renderings .Figure.32 is a part of a series of lithographs titled *The Alphabet of Democracy* produced in 2008, it is titled *B is for Black*. The image illustrates what one would imagine to be a page out of an official Chambers & Oxford dictionary, where the definition of black would be:

> opposite of white, dirty, messy, without light, dark, illegal, dim, smuggled, sombre, disastrous, dismal, obscure, sullen, bad tempered, angry, horrible, grotesque, malignant, unlucky, unhappy, depressed (Kannemeyer 2008)

Above the definition in Kannemeyer's work is a depiction of an anonymous "black" person as an embodiment of all listed unsavoury characteristics. In his portrayal of the typical "black" person, what is perhaps interesting is the appropriation of "coon imagery", a technique synonymous with racial stereotyping that can be traced back to American slavery. Juxtaposed below *B for Black* figure. 32, is *W for White* figure, 33. The definition of white reads as follows:

> Colour of milk or fresh snow, innocent, unstained, pure, unblemished, bright, anti-revolutionary, auspicious, reliable, favourable, honourable, honest, up right, without blood-shed, free

from guilt.

The flattering definition is embodied by a grinning “white man”, who looks pretty content to be “white”. The inclusion of pink in Kannemeyer's colour palette further illustrates the ideas of innocence and purity that the image of “white “people is associated with. However Kannemeyer's excessively flattering choice of words seem too good to be true, words like “without bloodshed”, “upright” and “free from guilt”, lead the critical viewer to suspicious of the intentions of the author and therefore reveal a propagandist motive. By portraying the dictionary as the source of such definitions, Kannemeyer's suggests that such fixed definitions of “racial” groups circulate within the realm of public knowledge and they are perceived to bear some resemblance to the truth. Stereotypes are particularly damaging because they distort the ways in which social groups and individuals are perceived (Pickering 2005:38). This distortion is achieved by reducing specific groups to a limited set of conceptions. The idea is that they exaggerate and homogenise traits held to be characteristic of particular people. Such images like Kannemeyer’s are held to be simplistic and rigid, and they are based on discriminatory values that are damaging to people’s actual social and personal identities. Importantly stereotypes function as a rationale for exploitative treatment, or as the justification for aggressive behavior (Pickering 2005:40).

Frantz Fanon (2008) is a pertinent reference, when it comes to the black psyche under the oppression of colonial stereotypes, he wrote a book entitled *Black Skins White Masks*, which is the most salient example of his insight. In his book Fanon rhetorically asks the question, “What does racism do to people? It objectifies” he answers (Fanon in Schmidt 1996:35). Objectification is a fundamental component of racism that is bound up in negative stereotyping. He further states, “And then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects, sealed in that crushing object hood” (Fanon 2008: 82). Objectification is a form of representation, bound up in stereotypes which function as a means of social control. Historically objectification follows on the heels dehumanisation (Gqola 2001). The stereotype became the dominant way through which slave reality was read and interpreted by the oppressor master. One of the pervasive ways in which slaves were objectified, was in the way that they were represented as an undifferentiated mass. As Gqola (2001:60) writes,

> Objectification is a process by which people are dehumanised, made ghost-like; the image created by the oppressor replaces the actual being. The actual being is denied speech, denied self - definition, self- realization and overall this denied selfhood is the point of objectification. A group of humans are denied their history, language, music and when these values exist, they exist as a sub-culture, but in the dominant culture only certain elements are chosen, recast, co-opted and made available to the definition of these people.

The portrayal of black people as defective therefore inferior was one of the many ways used to justify and lessen the guilt of the crimes committed against them, such as the genocide of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Susan Gubar (1997:57) articulately states that blackface minstrelsy was used as a method of shifting and concealing the guilt. In a complex way that a mask can conceal and reveal, blackface minstrelsy revealed and concealed the repulsion and desire that white American men felt towards African-American men and women. Minstrelsy became a popular performative art form, many white Americans believed tapped into authentic African-American traditions. Gubar (1997:95) reveals that the creation and performance of minstrelsy exposed the neurotic double-edged sword of negrophobia and negrophilia of whites. Susan Gubar defines this love hate relationship as a psychopathology of a somewhat latent black envy.

This was evident in the way that the black image was either lionised or demonised in a manner that denied normality. The conditions of Negrophilia and Negrophobia was thus about exploring the perceptions of difference in a way that best reflected some white people rather than their exoticised objects (Mercer 1993:184 ; Archer-Straw 2000). Blackface minstrelsy can be interpreted as a symbolic violence that executed a character assassination against black people particularly black masculinity (Gubar 1997:197). This symbolic violence came in the form of the hyper-masculinisation and hyper-sexualisation of black men as menacing rapists, a notorious stereotype that implicitly informed the performance of blackface. Black males were constructed as hyper-virile "walking phallic symbols", the notorious power of these mythical beliefs about black men led to many gruesome lynchings', castrations, mutilations and incarcerations of black men accused of raping white women. The black body has endured a history of more than symbolic white violence in North America:

> The history of the black body in North America is fundamentally linked to the history of whiteness, primarily whiteness expressed in the form of fear, sadism, hatred, brutality, terror, avoidance, desire, solipsism, madness, policing, politics, and the production and projection of white fantasies. From the perspective of whiteness, the black body is criminality itself. It is the monstrous; it is that which should be feared and yet desired, sought out in forbidden white sexual adventures and fantasies…The Black body is deemed the quintessential object of the ethnocentric gaze, the "strange", exotic and fascinating object of anthropology (Yancy 2008:16).

Gubar (1997:197) describes it as an odd double bind of black men being imbued with hypothetical sexual powers even though drained of any political or social potency. *White Nightmare: Black Dicks* (2007) figure 30 Kannemeyer's depicts this phallic objectification, which reduces black people to their "sexual prowess". In the cartoon we see two terrified white men shouting for help, while grappling with uncontrollable disembodied black penises, which have taken on a snake like manifestation. As the title suggests, this depiction is only a projection of a *White Nightmare* or white fears that are inspired by racism. However, the image does reproduce a familiar relationship between the "white" man and "black" man of subject and object, where "blackness" is imbued with an animalistic deviance that poses a threat to "white" bourgeois morality.

The stereotype that Kannemeyer reproduces in *White Nightmare* attributes black people with an abnormal sexual potency that borders on the perverse. Fanon (in Zahar 1974:32) claims that white people's hatred stems from their feeling of their feelings of sexual inferiority. Consequently the lynching of a "black" people could be interpreted as a form of sexual revenge. Fanon (ibid) implies that historically speaking "intellectual" progress entails a loss of sexual potential. Thus he interprets racism as the projection of the "civilised" white man's irrational longing for the lost paradise of sexual license onto the "black people", projecting his own desires onto "black people".

The reduction of black people to unbridled sexual potency (Fanon 2008:121), is also best exemplified in the tragic legacy of Sarah Baartman, the hyper-sexualisation of people of African descent is not a new phenomenon, and as Gqola ( 2001:59) states that "in the preoccupation with the "Others" body, the genitals[61] became the loci of the colonial gaze".

[61] Stereotypes utilized sexuality to describe, define, categorize and symbolize the "Otherness" of the indigenous

Despite Lott's notion of minstrelsy reflecting a slave-master relationship of exploitation and objectification, it is not easy to understand how the performance of blackface captured the conflation of violence with sexuality. In his book *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance*, I believe that the author, Richard Schechner (1993:230) attempts to demystify the seemingly irrational convergence of violence, performance and sexuality. Schechner (1993:230) describes human ritual actions as very closely tied to theatre performance, suggesting that the interactions that rituals address contain and mediate concerns around hierarchy, territory, sexuality and mating. Rituals are symbolic ambivalent actions that facilitate real transactions, and they help avoid too direct a confrontation with these events. Schechner (1993:230) explains that rituals are also "bridges-reliable doings carrying people across dangerous waters. It is no accident that many rituals are also rites of passage." Ritual, like theatre performance, is behaviour "rearranged, condensed, exaggerated, and made rhythmic. Broadly speaking ritual and theatre performances are considered substitutes or surrogates for "real life", in this case the emphasis is on performative theatre as a parody of the violence of "real life" (Schechner 1993:232). Furthermore, Schechner's view corresponds with that of Rene Girard in his *Violence and the Sacred* (1977) when Girard (1977:35) claims that ritual sublimates violence. The instinctual impulse of violence is diverted or modified into a more socially acceptable activity. The impulse of violence is transformed into a purer or idealized form; in this case this idealization comes in the form blackface performance. The confiscation of the black body and transaction of labour from the black body, which historically under the context of slavery would have approximated to violence, is represented in blackface minus the physical violence. In the performance of black face the violent transaction is symbolic and the black body, originally "seen" as dirty and impure is now like a fetish, sublimated. The performance of blackface to functions as a ritual is to "purify" the violence. Girard encapsulates this link of violence to sexuality in the quote below:

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inhabitants of the Cape. These perceptions were widely documented in travelogues in the Cape as well. Johan Nieuhof ( in Erasmus 2001:33) wrote in 1654 wrote some of his observation " The sex organs of the men are large [Khoisan], Yet, they have, it is said, one testicle only… It is said that by this cutting of the right testicle they are made more agile and better runners. The women have long breasts, especially the married ones: these they have hanging loose and uncovered, and from them give suck to the child hanging on their back. The lining of their private parts seems to be loose and to hang somewhat. The Hottentots squat on their heels"

> Like violence, sexual desire tends to fasten upon surrogate objects if the object to which it was originally attracted remains inaccessible; it willingly accepts substitutes. And again like violence, repressed sexual desire accumulates energy that sooner or later bursts forth, causing tremendous havoc. The shift from violence to sexuality and from sexuality to violence is easily affected, even by the most normal individuals, totally lacking in perversion. Thwarted sexuality leads naturally to violence, just as lover's quarrels often end in amorous embrace (in Schechner 1993:233)

In interpreting the performance of blackface within Girard's and Schechner's frameworks, it becomes clear that blackface was not only a reflection of the real life violent exploitation of the slave bodies. In fact blackface became a medium or "surrogate object" used as a as a threshold of accessing and owning the "Othered" black body. The transgressive fantasy-cum fetish of "Race change"[62] was permitted and rendered permeable through the performance of "blackness". According to Susan Gubar (1997) this performance "transformed" European Americans not into "blacks" but into "white negroes". It allowed whites to laugh at their own negative myths under the guise of blackness. When African-Americans performed in blackface they mimicked white people in black face and the boundaries between authenticity and imitation became thin indeed.

The advent of African-American minstrels into the minstrel stage from the mid to late 1850's was influenced by different reasons from those that initially inspired European Americans (Gottschild 1996:108). For an African American like Bert Williams in figure 22 minstrelsy was a career avenue that ensured a means of employment. Despite their entry into the industry, they still had little agency in it, from the white minstrel era through to the period of black minstrelsy, the genre remained a white controlled monopoly, which means that black entrepreneurial efforts failed unless they were managed and produced by whites, because white-owned theatres refused to deal with black entrepreneurs (Gottschild) 1996:108.

[62] In his audacious book published in 1960 about race change titled *The White Negro*, Norman Mailer uncovers a psychopathology of fear, admiration, and envy, as well as identification with and attraction toward-the "black stud" during the fifties and sixties (Gubar1997:176).

Minstrelsy performed by African-Americans opened up an interpretive space for complicity and subversion depending on how one sees it. This means that at this point, African-Americans had agency to subvert stereotypes about themselves (Gubar 1997:97). On the surface level blackface performed by the descendants of slaves, required an internalisation process of the "thrown back image" of the stereotype. Whereby the black body is "confiscated" and returned back in the form of a stereotype that is "problematic, ugly and wretched". This "thrown back image" requires African-American performers to "see" the black self as "seen" by the white people (Yancy 2003:183). Arguably the donning and appropriation of the blackface mask by the people that it was meant to be mocking, could easily be interpreted as act of self–hate by a lazy thinker, if one doesn't delve below the surface as Gottschild suggests :

> Both they and their black audiences recognised the mask, they knew who had constructed it, and knew how to live outside of it while appearing to be living within it-which is what masking is all about. Blacks didn't need to be told that the distorted minstrel characters were not representative of real black people, they knew that. They also knew and experienced racism first-hand, on a daily basis. They had an intimate understanding of the necessity of living in two worlds and utilizing the mask as a survival mechanism. Thus black laughter at blacks in blackface cannot be simply written off as black self- hatred; it is as much an affirmation and confirmation of common roots and familiar foes. The irony here is that minstrelsy by blacks and for blacks could be used as an act of defiance, empowerment, or liberation (Gottschild 1997: 113)

Beyond the surface layer it becomes evident that irony and parody are at play. Irony is inevitably implied on both sides of the spectrum: the playing with power irony of, miming to master the master, or the love hate irony of imitating to demystify "the other" (Yancy 2003:183). Gottschild (1996:09) claims that people of African descent cannot be dismissed as "sell outs" or accused of self -hate, scholars should instead perceive the convention of African Americans blacking up as an ironic and snide comment on power play. Instead when the descendants of slaves entered the blackface genre, the stage became a place where they could dominate the master and exhibit black agency over white racism. It made sense for black performers to parody these alien stereotypes, "black minstrels stereotyped the stereotype by imitating the imitation" (Gottschild 1996:110).

## 3.2 THE CARNIVALESQUE: RITUALS OF INVERSION AND CONFLATION EMBEDDED IN MINSTRELSY

As much as we should be mindful that racism formed the bedrock of the construction of blackface, in this section I am interested in deconstructing blackface within the framework of the carnivalesque. I believe that the element of the carnival layered within minstrelsy is imperative in understanding minstrelsy's trans-continental trajectory and incorporation into the New Year's festival in Cape Town.

Anthropologist Victor Turner (1969:95) noted that there could be a fundamental human need to participate in rituals that question hierarchy and conflate opposites. As a result such rituals fall outside orthodox classification and are liminal in "the betwixt and in between". In the seminal book entitled, *The Ritual Process,* Turner (1969: 97) suggests that people that are starved of an attribute in their functional day to day activities, apparently seek that repressed "Other" attribute in ritual liminalities. He says that even in hierarchically structured societies every social position has some sacred characteristics that can be acquired during a rite of passage, when the positions of the low and the high are converged and exchanged by the participants (Turner 1969:97). Although his findings were primarily drawn from a study of the Ndembu[63] ritual festivals, I agree with Cockerell (1997: 157) when he asserts that Turners observations apply equally to blackface minstrelsy. In this section I discuss the carnivalesque within minstrelsy as an example of such liminality. Presdee's defines Carnival as the ritualized mediation between order and disorder, carnival is a domain where the pleasure of playing at the boundaries is provided for (Presdee 2002: 02).

The structurally inferior aspire to symbolic structural superiority in ritual; the structurally superior aspire to symbolic inferiority and they undergo penance to achieve it. According to Cockerell (1997: 161), blackface was not just simply the act of perversity for its own sake; it was an engagement at the edges that came from the magnetic attraction of marginal opposites. Turner in speaks about this attraction to the in between as the edge effect that results in ambiguity (Cockerell 1997: 157). Bakhtin wrote prolifically that the most intense and productive life of culture takes place on the boundaries (in Cockerell 1997:160).

The main constituent element of carnival is excess, there is excessive focus on pleasures of the body. The body is foregrounded in opposition to the dominant and the accepted values of

[63] A socio-linguistic group in Zambia (Turner 1969)

restraint and sobriety which are associated with the mind (Presdee 2002:02). So far in my analysis I have discussed how people of African descent were defined and objectified through their bodies. The objectification and the super- exploitation of the black body as muscle-machine generating labour was justified (Mercer 1994:138). In contrast to white people, who are constructed as dominant in the faculty of the mind, blackface performance played out an age old philosophic conundrum of the Cartesian mind/body split, by presenting the white man as the mind and the mimicked black as the body, revealing the dynamics of cultural imperialism (Gubar 1997:99).

Attached to excess is the notion of transgression that is central to the operation of carnival. Intimately connected with the acts of transgression is the upturning or reversal of dominant authority structures (Mercer 1993:138). Carnival licenses transgression and thus openly defies or mocks the values of the hegemony and as such the transgressor is put in a position of power as the carnival society temporarily replaces the dominant one, without sanction. Through its acts, structure and imagery carnival legitimates its participants' behavior that would be considered deviant to what is generally seen as proper within a normal "social space. Since authority structures are challenged and upturned it is possible to perceive carnival as the voice of those below. However at the same time, I am mindful that carnival is not simply the reversal or inversion of power, Presdee (2002:6) states that carnival must be seen as many voiced since the last thing that it's the shifting authority attempts to do is unify or polarize. Carnivals contain elements of inversion rites, but not complete inversion. Constant-Martin (1999) believes the focus on Bakhtin's analysis should probably be not inversion but ambivalence, for he believes there is no absolute negation in carnival, rather a contradictory unity, for every element of carnival focuses on the wholeness of a world that is in the throes of death and rebirth.

"The performer is encouraged to act in between identities, in this sense performing is a paradigm of liminality "and what is liminality, but literally the threshold, the space that both separates and joins spaces: the essence of inbetweeness" (1985:295). Dave Cockerell (1997: 160) claims black face minstrelsy is similar to carnival, because it is an inversion ritual, when low ranking members of society assume positions of authority. What is normally excluded and despised is temporarily exalted and in this case it is blackness and the black body that takes

centre stage and whiteness becomes peripheral, constituting the audience and spectator. In 19th century North America, black face minstrelsy was a way of engaging the black “Other”, where white Americans explored the realms of the excluded and forbidden. Rituals of status reversal, according to Turner in (Cockerell 1997: 161) “mask the weak in strength, demand of the strong that they be passive and endure the symbolic and even real aggression shown against them by structural inferiors”.

Victor Turner states that the attributes of liminality are necessarily ambiguous, since they elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate positions in a cultural space (in Cockerell 1997:161). “Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are between the positions assigned by law, custom ceremonial, and convention. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols.” That is why blackface minstrelsy was delicately balanced in 19th century America, at the point between the public and private, community and individual, white and, mind and body, inferior and superior, master and slave, self and other, desire and repulsion, fantasy and reality.

The performance of carnival claims the body back from those who wish to control it, for instance, the mask of blackness permitted it’s performers to move with a surrogate body. This process also functioned as a release from the normal restraints of proper conduct (Gottschild 1993:8) the blackface mask was used effectively in these rituals of release, as method of obscuring personal identity in as much it exposed it. Like carnival, blackface became a safety valve, an outlet for the release of repressed energies and emotion.

## 3.3 THE MERRY-GO-ROUND OF APPROPRIATION

After the slaves were set free in the Cape colony in 1838, a cultural fusion was set in motion between the celebrations of emancipation and the New Year’s celebrations. Before emancipation, the second day of January was the only time that slaves had a day off in the year to engage in their own festivities, after their masters had celebrated their New Years on the first day of January. The photograph in figure.27 depicts a festive community gathering amongst the residents that would have been typical on a public holiday. The 2nd of January was celebrated as a quasi- Independence Day for the Cape slave communities. The second day of January is still celebrated in Cape Town today as the *Tweede Nuwe Jaare*. For that one day, on the Tweede Nuwe Jaar, the slaves, the lowest in Cape society lorded over all the others. In

a carnivalesque fashion, the usual order of things stood on its head symbolically if not actually, the fractured, diverse identity of the slave class was celebrated and given a space to assert and express itself (Powell 2008:159).

In addition these events provided the occasion for building and strengthening social links within a community of people coming from diverse cultural backgrounds and assembled together because they shared the same condition (Constant-Martin 2000:371).The Cape New Year Festivals progressively integrated a diversity of elements, creating a creole aesthetic. The Virginia Jubilee Singers added African American religious hymns to their repertoire (*Cape Times*, 1 January 1909. The American Sporting Troupe played the "Wild Indians", with masks, bows, and arrows, pointing to a West Indian contribution to the creation of the Atjas who still exists today ( Constant-Martin 2000:369).

The emblematic Ghoema drum is a good example of a creole invention. The Ghoema drum may be related to drums from Java, the Sunda Islands, or Malaysia (Desai 1983:32; Kirby 1939 in Constant- Martin 2000:372).The Ghoema drum is made from a wine barrel and is similar to drums found in creole societies where liquor was produced such as the West Indies. According to Constant-Martin its name sounds interestingly close to the Bantu root *ngoma*, which connotes drum, drumming, dancing, and music in general. "If the Ghoema has become the symbol of Cape Town's creole culture, it may be precisely because Asia, Africa and Europe met under its skin" (Constant Martin 2000:372).

Minstrelsy is a striking example of how American influences were absorbed and adapted in the constant remaking of cultural tradition (Worden 1999:244). For example, from 1907 the celebrations became competitive, the minstrel troupes would compete in the "buck and wing", "cake walk", "clog dancing", and "step dancing", and eastern dancing categories were featured by 1908. The element of novelty was always important and the hits of the day always found their way into the stadium and the streets. Some songs were retained in the repertoire long after their popularity waned, for example the *Die Alibama* is a famous Afrikaans *moppie*[64] played to the Ghoema drum, that is still sung today by the Klopse ,

[64]Moppies are Afrikaans songs invented by slaves, to sing and dance amongst themselves; sometimes they are called Ghoema (drum) songs because they are sung to the Ghoema beat. Moppies are partially made up of well-known songs; their lyrics twist ordinary events in an amusing way to make the audience laugh using the Afrikaans dialect of the "coloureds" to the full, which is precisely why they are called comic songs. Today they

apparently it was in District Six in the 19th century created (Meltzer 2010) (Constant-Martin 2000:370). After 1948, competitions were introduced for Afrikaans liedjies and Afrikaans moppies, despite the reluctance of the "Coon" captains whose main source of inspiration were the American films they watched. It was between the 1930s and the beginning of the 1950s that the carnivals took the form that they have, more or less kept until today. The "coon" then became the dominant character of the carnival, joined, especially for the street parades. Blackface minstrelsy was incorporated into the New Year celebrations shortly after the year 1848 when Cape Town witnessed its first minstrel performance show featuring T*he Ethiopian Serenades*. The Original Christy minstrels followed thereafter and their performance left an indelible mark on the creative minds of Cape Town's slave population, Worden expands as follows

> As for Cape Town's slave descendants, they found resonances in the sentiments and ambivalences of minstrel songs like "I'm leaving thee in sorrow Annie", "Poor old Jeff", "Hard Time" and "Massie's in the cold ground". Blackface minstrelsy was also to have a direct influence on the New Year carnival, which was pre-eminently the festival of the underclasses (Worden 1999:244).

A visit by the Orpheus M. McAdoo Jubilee Singers figure, 28 in the early 1890's was another potent cultural influence to the Cape Town populations. The Minstrel Jubilee singers were made up of African-Americans, led by Orpheus MacAdoo, a graduate from the Hampton Institute of Virginia. Keeping up with the conventions of the blackface minstrelsy genre, they blackened their faces with burnt cork, however they did not always reproduce the content that white performers had made popular, they adapted the genre to suit their own experiences as African-American performers. According to Constant-Martin (2010:188), their effect in Cape Town was phenomenal "white audiences encored them many times, and "coloured" audiences were able to identify easily with those called colored in the United States." It is interesting to note that when the Orpheus MacAdoo minstrels disbanded, some of its members settled in Cape Town and joined forces with local musicians that were involved in the New Year festivities which were later adapted into Carnival (Erlman in Constant-Martin 2010:188). The integration of the African-American influences into Carnival, serves as an example of how creolisation took shape in Cape Town. Carnival from its inception was made of diverse

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belong to the repertoire of carnival troupes and Malay choirs. Moppies are played at a lively tempo; they alternate a soloist, whose movements emphasize the comic dimension of the words (Constant-Martin 2010:194).

influences that converged and intermingled to produce original sounds (Constant-Martin 2010:189).

From its conception Cape Townian residents used the New Year's celebration as a salve for their oppression, under slavery, colonialism and apartheid. The segregative laws of Apartheid made the Carnival troupes and their performances more difficult to organise because they placed the best stadiums off limits to those classified as "coloured" by apartheid and when they did perform they had to perform to a segregated audience (Constant-Martin 1999). The Carnival often suffered brutal suppression from the authorities during Apartheid. As a result Carnival became powerful mechanism of community cohesion and cultural continuity. It was subtly used for communicating and affirming values that strengthened bonds in the new societies that emerged from the experiences of forced migration. The enduring tradition of Carnival has given a cultural status to the people who have a history of subjugation. Today, in contemporary South Africa the performers have the privilege of performing to a diverse audience in the metropolis. From its inception during the 1830's the Carnival has played an important role in the cultural life of Cape Town (Constant-Martin 1999).

Throughout the years, South African cultural institutions such as national museums have been slow to recognise the performance of Carnival as an artistic expression and practice worthy of official recognition. However there was an attempt to correct this practice when in 2010 the castle museum hosted its first exhibition in recognition of the Carnival's history in the city. Within the Fine Art world, particularly in gallery spaces, the performance of Carnival has been under represented. Claire Tancons is a curator, writer and scholar born in Guadeloupe based in New Orleans, she has written extensively about the relationship between Carnivals and the art world. According to (Tancons 2008) carnivals are synonymous with practices and approaches that cannot easily be accommodated or placed spatially and formally. They are perceived as placeless in the art institutional contexts, simply because they do not necessarily fit in or belong in the received contexts and frameworks of commercial art institutions, particularly galleries, theatres and cultural centres were the representation of art is contained and controlled. Carnivals with their site-specific elements problematise the conventions of form and representation within institutional spaces (Hill and Paris 2006:11). As such, they

resist institutional spaces and work outside of the sites of official culture. They represent practices and approaches that expand the formal and cultural framework of art. The performance of carnival brings into question accepted institutional approaches and practices which are firmly grounded in questions of context, site and audience. Carnival is alert and responsive to the ideas of context of site compared to other conventional art mediums and it has by far a diverse audience and a heightened sense of place. As Tancons (2008:112) states:

> Recognizing creole carnivals and festivals as a major, if not the main, field of artistic creation. The arts' follows the trends of European academism in the form of traditional mediums such as painting, sculpture and drawing. It is also attempting to delineate an alternative art historical narrative that did not engender modernism, but a form that is neither subservient to it nor, for lack of taking part in it, alien to the refinements of high art. Paying tribute to the resistance ethos of carnival is also recognizing the extent to which Carnival processions and political manifestations often collide and converge as expressions of popular angst against real and perceived abuses of power

Tancons (2008) suggests that what may account for the overlooking of Carnival in art-historical discourse and curatorial practice is because it is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon; it is viewed as a ritual and festival, a natural object of folklore and anthropology. Tancons (2008:44) asserts that carnival[65] can be classified as an art form, that is still struggling to find its historians, critics and curators. The society of the Cape, though it may have not been aware that it was merely reproducing an anthropologically familiar institution of culture ubiquitous throughout the world- which celebrates the radical inversion of the dynamics of power. In her pertinent essay titled *the greatest free show on earth: Carnival from Trinidad to Brazil, Cape Town to New Orleans,* Claire Tancons (2008:44) explains the differences and similarities between European Carnivals of the Middle Ages and contemporary Creole carnivals. More significantly she draws parallels between the Cape Carnival, the Trinidad Carnival, the Brazilian Carnival and the New Orleans Mardi Gras. In her research she discovered that the

[65]It is worth mentioning that there was a major exhibition on carnival that took place in 2009 in New Orleans. The Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club is a carnival group that participates in the Mardi Gras. In 2009 it celebrated its 100 anniversary and to mark the occasion, the Louisiana State Museum opened an exhibition titled *From Tramps to Kings: 100 Years of Zulu at the Presbytere*. The 3,000-square-foot exhibit traced the carnival club from its beginnings in 1909 through to 2009. Zulu is predominantly made up of African American performers and is known for its black faced performers. <http:// www.nola.com/> accessed on the 8th of January 2012

New Orleans Mardi Gras and the Cape Carnival are similar in the sense that they reflect the racial discrimination on which they once thrived (Tancons 2008:46) . They remain the cultural domain of one community. In Cape Town, Carnival if flagrantly marginalized as, it is viewed as an exclusively working class "coloured" domain.

By contrast in Trinidad and in Brazil, carnival is marketed as an emblem of national unity and harmony, within which different people from different classes can, and do, to some extent, cohabit. Tancons (2008) defines Carnival as a processional durational art form, with its main stage as the street and its primary vehicle as the human being. Its popularity rests on the fact that it engages a mass of people in the democratic spaces such as the streets and stadiums. In contrast to the majority of art mediums that are enclosed in elite spaces of the white-cube gallery and the black box theatre. Tancons (2008:53) suggests that the street as stage returns the participants to an even older space. She (Tancons 2008:111) writes that:

> Carnival withdrew from Europe as a popular manifestation, giving way instead to the rarefied enjoyments of a few; it surged into the new world, where slavery and colonialisation replaced servitude feudalism. Europe's growing and soon excessive consumption of spices, cocoa and cotton announced the beginning of capital accumulation and stood in contrast to the naked masses of slaves and indentured labourers, the breeders of material pleasures. To their masters material pleasures. If the accumulation of capital is the accumulation of 'the spectacle, the cancellation of capital is condition of the carnival. If capital excess breeds the Spectacle, the lack of capital engenders carnival. Lack however is not absence, but presence denied. Carnivals carved themselves a piece of urban space out of the necessity to exist and resist.

Contemporary carnivals embody and promote communal values and collective behaviour. They also retain elements of inversion and subversion strategies that challenge power and disrupt authority that inform the European Carnival as analysed by Mikhael Bakhtin (1984), in his seminal research *Rabelais and his world.* The current conditions of creole carnivals such as the Trinidad carnival, the Brazilian carnival, Mardi Gras in New Orleans and the Cape Carnival are separated by centuries from the those of the European middle ages (Tancons 2008:44). Despite the time gap, a valid comparison can be drawn, because creole carnivals were formed with the context of slavery and colonialism, which can be seen as updated

versions of the feudalism and servitude of the past. Beyond slavery and colonialism, creole carnival remains somewhat subversive in the way that it pushes the boundaries of public space in democratised societies were egalitarianism continues to be tested (ibid). In the new world Carnival became creolised in the ways that it claimed as an expressive form of those who had been previously enslaved. In South Africa, it emerged as a cultural practice in the period immediately ushering in Apartheid. Although it had existed as a cultural manifestation before, when black-face minstrelsy arrived in Cape Town it was adopted by the recently emancipated slave population.

## 3.4. CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF VISUAL CULTURE AND PERFORMANCE THAT REFERENCE THE CAPE CARNIVAL

In recent years there have been a few notable references to the Cape carnival produced by contemporary artists. The most recent and significant reference was *A Walk into the Night*[66] a processional piece that I attended on the 2nd of May 2009. It was performed at the Cape 09 Biennale and curated by Claire Tancons. Inspired by the traditions of the Trinidad carnivals and West African shadow puppets, *A walk into the night was* an inventive shadow play, with various elements worn and carried by about one hundred participants, casting shadows onto horizontal and vertical planes along the itinerary of the procession figure 34 & 35. These shadows were projected onto the hand-held white screens, onto buildings, the side walk and the ground (Dodd 2009). The shadow play suggested subtly in an uncanny way to the dark history of the city, that has a legacy of marginalisation from the official narrative of the city. This is a history of movement in the city in the form of the slave trade, relocation and urban restructuring in the form of urban renewal and displacement, and performative movement in the form of the Cape carnival performance and procession.

The one hour procession curated by Claire Tancons was in collaboration with Trinidadian

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[66] *A walk into the night,* borrows its title from an acclaimed novel by Capetonians Alex La Guma published in 1963. La Guma's book expresses the frustration, fear and oppression experienced by “coloured” people in South Africa and it is a telling account of the second-class treatment and the awfulness of daily life. In the book, *A Walk into the Night*, La Guma describes the political and second class social existence of the “coloured” people of the District Six slum in Cape Town. He examines the life of the district though the actions of four characters during the course of one night. He focuses on the decay and despair of the “slum”, whose residents are frequently too absorbed by their own miserable state to react to it, and thus suffer alone (La Guma 1963).

visual artist Marlon Griffith and a South African music composer Garth Erasmus. Since experiencing the carnival in Trinidad in 2005, she has been focusing on carnival as an object of art historical inquiry and curatorial experimentation. In her writings, Tancons (2008) argues for the recognition of New World Carnival, Trinidad's Mas in particular, as a modern, urban art form, possibly the Americas' true, undiscovered Modern Art. In her curatorial projects (7th Gwangju Biennial and 2nd Cape Town Biennial), she has promoted the procession as a curatorial format for the presentation of carnival and performance arts.

The procession began at the inner city Company Gardens at 7pm. The carnival procession was brought to life with the help of 150 local participants; most of them young children who were holding up intricately cut out figures, with Victorian style patterns echoing the colonial history of the city. Lights were shone onto the cut figures projecting dancing night time silhouettes onto horizontal and vertical white sheets. For seconds at a time young maidens, Victorian madams and dinosaurs would spring to life onto the sheets and would disappear into nothingness. The ephemeral dance of light and shadow play proceeded beneath the giant canopy of trees at the Company Gardens. The procession was accompanied by two small bands of indigenous Khoisan musical instruments. (Dodd 2009). Running counter to the Cape Carnivals processional model in which the emphasis is placed on visibility through colourful costumes ,bold floats and audibility with loud marching band ensembles, *A Walk into the Night* offered a reflexive and contemplative alternative in which neither the visual nor the aural elements of the procession were given whole to the public. *A Walk into the Night*, told the story of the legacy of the District Six forced removals and it questioned the continuing dislocation of immigrant communities in Cape Town (Jordan 2009).

Some viewers at the procession expressed that the procession was not well executed because it lacked an overall cohesion. Some said the light was too faint and it should have been brighter and the screens of cloth tauter, the images clearer. Despite its magical play of light and shadow, the marshalled procession of school children hoisting cut-outs of feminine figures and dinosaurs behind a wall of white linen was rather whimsical, transitory and slight. However Dodd[67] differs and argues that the makeshift element of the procession is what made

[67]Alexandra Dodd is an affiliated researcher at the Research Centre, Visual Identities in Art and Design, Faculty of Art, Design and Architecture, at the University of Johannesburg. <http://www.smallaxe.net/> accessed on the

it interesting, “after all it was not an opera but a street parade-imperfect and communal” its imperfections and flaws were all part of its unique charm. I thought the whimsical play on light and shadows was effective especially in such a historically charged space. I interpreted it as direct comment on the ways that the past is remembered. The procession provoked the viewer to question which parts of history are illuminated and which parts are sanctioned and as a result remain in the shadows. The procession offered an alternative frame within which to consider standard historical narratives, the use of a wide range of tools offered diverse methods for representing the past and for making meaning out of it. *A walk into the Night* procession reframed historical discourse and in the process it resisted the boundaries, and limits so useful to traditional academic writing and academic structures. Historians are not the only people who should or do have license to interpret the past. As Desai (2010:08) suggests historical stories are told, written down, danced, sung and performed on stages or on streets by a range of individuals many of whom care as much about the past as professional historians.

In an interview with Massimiliano Scuderi (2010) about carnival processions and parades, Claire Tancons comments that the performance made a significant reference to the apartheid era forced removals which dislocated the coloured population from the centre of the city to it outskirts By staging it at the company gardens previously the DEIC gardens it acted as a symbolic return of this population with a hundred participants in the Cape Town carnival which is historically the tradition of “coloureds”. Political and cultural resistance are intertwined and played out in such artistic practices such as the Carnival. *A walk into the night,* she says can be interpreted as celebrating a form of cultural resistance carried out through artistic practice, often seen as marginal, but which is in fact at the core of societal debates (Tancons 2010).

In terms of its political and social significance, the procession was pertinent to the history and the struggles of the ordinary people of Cape Town. As international art practitioners, Claire Tancons and Marlon Griffith can be commended for their efforts in constructing an artistic piece that sensitively negotiated and subtly wove in our local slave histories place within a

1 April 2011.

global tapestry of carnival performance. In spite of that, the procession took on the destructive potential of carnival, when at the end of the procession the kids destroyed the art work. As a result, Cape 09 organisers got served with R400000 lawsuit.The Biennial organisers were sued after the chaos that erupted at the end of the procession when the children taking part went on the rampage, destroying many of the art works they were supposed to displaying. The organisers of the R200000 event that launched the *Cape 09* biennial - a contemporary African arts and culture extravaganza faced a R400000 damages claim from the featured artist Marlon Griffith. Griffith claims that all of his works were destroyed when the kids started sword-fighting with their art works; others dumped them or ripped them to pieces. “They literally ripped them apart,” Griffith said everything looked hopeful up until the point when the procession started to move and then all hell broke loose. He said the kids were not to blame because they did not know any better. By contrast, the organisers were to blame for including children and not better-behaved older teens.

It is interesting that this part of the Biennial ended on such a sour note considering that it had a significant community engagement initiative with most of its participants being from outside the city. If one is to consider the transitory nature of performance and Phelan's (1993) definition of performance as something that disappears, they go against the notion that art must reside in a static object that the artist Marlon Griffith desired to salvage. Additionally, Tancons's threat to halt foreign funding brought to the surface the inherent unequal power dynamics that accompanied the collaboration between the international and local organisers. The notion of power and place and the ways that they shape performance art is further explored in the analysis of the power-play exhibition.

## 3.5 THE POWER PLAY EXHIBITION

Anthea Moys’s performance in figure.34 was noteworthy in the way that it made a connection to the Cape Carnival and the power politics of space within the city of Cape Town. Her performance was part of an exhibition titled *Power play*, which was hosted by the Goodman Gallery situated in the inner city Cape Town. The show engaged directly with its context (Powell 2008). Anthea Moys's collaborative roof top performance *Deurmekaar in Cape Town* (2008) loosely choreographed the District Six Hanover Minstrels, to do a procession on the Fair Weather building rooftop full of regalia on the opening night, giving the work an

unrehearsed quality, the group arrived late at the opening night rendering the performance a retained sense of informality (Powell 2008). The curatorial idea that framed Moys's performance revolved around interacting with the location of Woodstock. Tavish McIntosh[68] (2008) echoes the sentiments of Claire Tancons with regard to nurturing the culture of resistance within performance by asserting that

> If art plays a plays a role outside of filling the pockets of its practitioners and curators we need more shows like Power-play that go beyond the aesthetics espoused by modernism and which actually engage the painful politics of our country.

Anthea Moys's performance *Deurmekaar* in Cape Town was a insightful socially relevant intervention into a city that was still dealing with the xenophobic attacks on foreigners. In a skimpy bikini, waving a rainbow coloured umbrella, Moys brought together a group of performers on the roof of the Goodmen Gallery building. She ushered in a troupe of Minstrel performers, a brass street band and a Congolese singer Everton Nsumbu. The New Hanover District Six minstrels bearing Goodman Gallery umbrellas were dancing, singing "twirling" in procession (Powell 2008). The execution of the performance carried the same unrehearsed informality and unpretentious ephemeral energy reminiscent of carnival processions. It was fun, lending an interaction between the players and the audience. It was a counterpoint, to the traditional sometimes theatrical performances, that render an apathetic distanced stiff audience.

Moys danced around, waving her hands to the Minstrel troupes in an instructive manner, mimicking a conductor cum choreographer, or perhaps a puppet master from a position of control. The performance proved to be a subtle and playful reproduction of power dynamics of the city if we look at the recent history of the city, the infamous forced removals of District Six that are referenced through the performance of the District Six New Hanover Minstrels. Performance art in general is connected to place because it usually happens at the shared time and space with its audience but it can also be said to be placeless because of the fact that it is

[68]Tavish McIntosh is a part-time lecturer in the History of Art and the Cape editor of Art throb, an online publication of South African art.<http:// Www.Arthrob.co.za./>

non -object oriented and non-commodity based (Hill and Paris 2006:06). For example unlike other static artworks there is not a place you can go view and purchase a performance art piece. Performance art is a rejection of objects and markets (Hill and Paris 2006:09), Performance artists turn to their bodies as the site and material of their practice and additionally place is an integral element within this constitution.

In the light of Moys's performance it became an uncanny affair, when one considers that Woodstock has been going through a process of gentrification and urban renewal which has left many of its previous lower-class residents displaced. The recent arrival of the Goodman Gallery, Michael Stevenson, Bell Roberts[69] publishing and the Whatiftheworld gallery have changed the social character of Woodstock (Burnett 2008). They stand as nothing short of middleclass landmarks within the working class neighbourhood of Woodstock. In cognisance of this middleclass invasion to Woodstock, Anthea Moys performance touched on contemporary dynamics of power and privilege, which made it an interesting and provocative piece. Historically art has served and continues to serve an ambiguous role, on the one hand it naturalizes power through the presentation of experience in terms of dominant discourse; and on the other hand, art has developed into a social institution. It challenges and second guesses the dynamics of power and the order of things by representing them in different ways. Anthea Moys collaborative performance straddled precariously between these two boundaries (Downey 2008:159).

*Conclusion*

When one looks at images or works of art, one intuitively recalls a range of related memories, ideas, emotions and events from different parts of human history (Desai 2010:7). Chapter three examined how images and ideas developed during the slave era continue to shape our visual culture in elusive ways. In the attempt to understand the image of the "coon" within the Cape Minstrel Carnival in both contemporary and in the historical context, chapter three

[69]Bell-Roberts is a publishing company that produces books on contemporary visual arts and culture with titles on art, design and architecture. In 2008 Woodstock started becoming the creative hub of the city mainly because it's close proximity to the city centre (Burnett 2008).

critically investigated the traces of creolisation evident in its construction. The "Coon" as an image that came out of a violent period of American slavery, this means that it potentially evokes notions of freedom and simultaenously notions of oppression, which is precisely why it was appropriated by the slave class into their New Year's celebrations. The "coon" is an image inevitably bound up with a visual language influenced by a dehumanizing ideology of racial difference and it embodies the symbolic violence of racist stereotypes. These racist stereotypes came from the racial categories that are neither natural nor biological but instead ideological, created by historical events and recreated through rituals such as blackface minstrelsy that reinforced the naturalness of these categories (Desai 2010:154).

South Africa is country fraught with racial tension, precisely because it is systematically still trying to purge itself from the racist ideology of apartheid that was naturalised; however racism still remains pervasive in our national psyche. Within the context of South Africa's difficult racial politics, Kwezi Gule[70] (2010), questions how progressive Kannemeyer's work is, if it fails to subvert the "white fears" and the racist stereotypes that it seeks to expose. This means that if Kannemeyer's work doesn't undermine the racial myths' that it illustrates, it ceases to be transformative or progressive. Additionally, as superficial as it may seem the fact that Kannemeyer is a "white" Afrikaaner means that for some, he represents a group that is historically not far removed from the source of racist stereotyping and this runs the risk of him being labelled a racist. The argument is the same in the United States of America, is it acceptable for "white" people to use the n word? given that it is a word that was historically used to by "whites" to dehumanise and insult "blacks". Ironically in popular culture, some "black" artists use it amongst themselves as a term of endearment does this practice qualify as a double standard?. This argument is linked to some of the reasons why the term "coon" was replaced with minstrel, despite the fact that many of the Minstrel Carnival performers refer to themselves proudly as "coons". In chapter three I examine these slippery fine lines between subverting and reinforcing and I contextualise them within the visual conventions that came out of the slave era

[70]Kwezi Gule was formerly the curator of contemporary collections at the Johannesburg Art Gallery. He is now chief curator at Hector Pieterson Memorial. He expressed his opinion on Anton Kannemeyer's art work in an article for the Mail and Guardian online titled Just *because you feel it doesn't mean it's there* published in 2010. <http://www.mailandguardianoline.co.za>. Accessed on the 10 November 2011

## THESIS CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis is to make an intervention into the discipline of Art History and Visual Culture in South Africa. As I have already mentioned, post-apartheid discourse on memory is abundant but limited to the study of colonial and apartheid memory. In the few instances that slave memory is recovered it has been within the Social Sciences. In comparison to the USA, South Africa has lagged behind, as there are numerous African-American artists[71] that have delved into their past of slavery in the attempt to enrich their present art making. As an exception to the rule, in South Africa the Cape Minstrel Carnival has in fact been the most salient and consistent communal cultural activity that celebrates the virtues of freedom yet came out of a sordid history of oppression and injustice.

Chapter one is the most expansive out of the three particularly because it was imperative that I discuss the social roots that the Carnival came out of, before examining the carnival itself. In the process I was overwhelmed by the multiplicity of components that are embedded in the process of slavery that could not go unacknowledged and which I believe deserve an in-depth analysis. Such as the impact slavery had on gender roles in South Africa. Orlando Patterson (1986) and Arjun Appadurai's (1982) approaches on slave relations as processional are invaluable in understanding how slavery is in fact a shape shifting process; of which its fragments permeate present day South Africa in subtle but significant ways. Discourse on the historical trajectory of apartheid classified "coloured" subjects is important if one is to delve into South Africa's foundation of creolisation and diaspora. However navigating discourse on identity is a tricky task if one is cautious not to fall into the trap of reproducing essentialisms based on purist homogeneity. This brings forth the value of contemporary discourse on creolisation in South Africa. Its value lies in the fact that it destabilises fixed categories of identity by encouraging hybridity in identity definitions.

Furthermore, the study of South Africa's creolized foundations in contemporary society renders visible the hidden histories of multiplicity. This is evident in how the onset of

[71]Kara Walker, Glen Ligon and Maria Magdalena Campos Pons are amongst the most prominent artists in the United States that through their art work comment on the history of slavery. Although Campos Pons is Cuban by birth, she works and lives in the United States of America (Desai 2010:10).

democracy led to some “white” South Africans rewriting new identities by claiming a slave and indigenous genealogy; such acts would have not passed with impunity before democracy. For instance the claiming of Krotoa as the mother of Afrikaaner nation is the most salient, although some may argue that claiming an indigenous ancestor is an expedient move for “white” South Africans; however such identity reconstructions reflect a shift in South African political power relations.

In Chapter two, I demonstrate how effective the Cape Minstrel Carnival is in subverting hierarchy based on institutional culture. Within the framework of this thesis, the subversions that I emphasize are multifaceted and layered. The most significant subversion comes through in the subtle ways that the Carnival mediates an underplayed public narrative of slavery in the city. Slavery and the creole diasporic beginnings of the South Africa challenge the sanctity of monolithic “pure” identities that were practiced during apartheid and still today. As the longest surviving cultural practice that has its social roots in slavery, it is alarming that after so many years, 2010 marked the first time that the Cape Minstrel Carnival was formally acknowledged through the belated *Ghoema and the Glitter* exhibition held at the Castle of Good Hope Museum.

*The Ghoema and the Glitter* exhibition proved to be very important because it facilitated dialogue between a national cultural institution and politically marginalized communities in the city. Theory on site-specific art is applicable to unpacking the implications of performing Carnival in the city. As Kwon (2004: 55) states the genre of site-specific art “initiates the rediscovery of minor places so far ignored by dominant culture”. This is especially true in this case because the site-specific aspect of the Carnival unearths repressed histories by providing a platform for greater visibility for marginalized communities to speak publicly about issues of violence and trauma. On the contrary, one could argue that the Carnival’s historical exclusion and its existence outside of official institutional life enabled its autonomy from state intervention and arguably enabled its freedom of expression.

In comparison to other conventional art forms, the performance of Carnival is in many ways resistant to institutionalisation and commercialisation, because it cannot be reduced to an object. The Cape Carnival is a free event, performed by a self-conscious community. It cannot be defined exclusively as a spectacle seen by an audience because everyone can participate.

Carnival in that sense is not shaped by western academic distinctions between performers and spectators, there will, for instance be dancing happening at the same time amongst the spectators and the performers.

The Cape Minstrel Carnival takes place literally on the streets of the city, which means it involves a diverse demographic, citizens of every rank, both that live in and out of the city. It's location on the streets and the pavement, inadvertently involves people that are not there to watch it, it reaches people who are simply there using the streets, getting from one place to another. Carnival is ephemeral and site specific, you have to be there to see it. Hence, the Carnival's context specificity means that it only happens in Cape Town and nowhere else. As a result the tourism industry and Cape local government has of late started promoting the Cape Minstrel Carnival as a local attraction in order to bolster commercial gain from an influx of international tourists and local visitors to the city.

The repackaging of the Cape Minstrel Carnival's image to suit an international tourist market was crystallized in its renaming from the Cape "Coon" Carnival to the more euphemistic Cape Minstrel Carnival. In chapter three I traced the controversial image of the "coon" to its creolized archetype in America. Specifically, because it is an image bound up with negative stereotypes established during slavery in the USA. American literature traces blackface minstrelsy to the relations of master and slave, this in effect elucidates the motives for the construction of a racist visual language that was used to consolidate racial myths. Although the American racist meanings accompanying the term "coon" were undermined when it was appropriated in Cape Town, the racist visual language manifested in rendering the "coon" image resurfaces in the art production of Anton Kannemeyer, a South African artist. Aesthetic borrowing is at the core of the creative process. In chapter three, I discussed Kannemeyer as an example of an artist that quotes or borrows a visual language developed during the slave era, and uses it in the contemporary moment. Kannemeyer's imagery is similar to the performance of Carnival because it straddles the fine line between reinforcing and subverting racially charged stereotypes.

In contemporary South Africa, we have an opportunity to revisit questions about the past; we have an opportunity to acknowledge the legacy of this past in the present. In this dissertation I have demonstrated in a contextualised way, how the narrative of South Africa's slave

experience or the attempted denial of that legacy, contributes in subtle ways to a visual and corporeal language bound up in the performance of the Cape Minstrel Carnival. The study of the Carnival within the art historical field, challenges institutionalised understandings of what constitutes the visual arts and it additionally assists in diversifying the field by opening up the practice of art and art history.

**Interview with Kevin Momberg 29 December 2009**

**How long have you been involved with the minstrel association?**

For five years now, I am in the management side of the minstrels we have thirty five troupes. I am actually the CEO of the Cape Minstrel Association and these are our offices right here

**How did you come to be part of the minstrels?**

For twenty years approximately, my father was a minstrel, through him I became a minstrel, my children are also in the carnival, my father used to play the banjo.

**Who are the minstrels and what kind of socio-economic background do they come from?**

The minstrels are working class people, most of them are from the Cape Flats and some of them are very poor

**Tell me where the parade begins and ends in Cape Town?**

We begin from keisersgracht street into Darling street up Wale street into the Bo Kaap and then down Rose street and then we board the busses to go to the stadium.

**Do you know where the tradition of minstrel performance comes from?**

The Carnival started when the slaves got freed and it has carried on ever since, but I am not the authority on that information, I know it has become a form of culture now.

**Tell me about a typical day of the minstrel carnival?**

We are there at six in the morning, it happens for the whole of January there are events most them don't happen in the city, we are only in the city on the 2nd of January.

**Is there going to be a difference with this year's carnival compared to the other years?**

No there is no big difference the routines are the same every year, it is pretty repetitious

**What happens after Carnival?**

People go out drinking

**What are the positive and negative aspects of Carnival?**

The negatives are that sometimes the people that participate in Carnival are gangsters and that they are violent and take drugs, negative things like that. On the positive side, is that Carnival brings different people together in celebration, it is an occasion where people get to dance, dress up and be happy.

**How does Carnival perform in the city without some of the negativity you have aforementioned taking place?**

The Carnival works with the police to ensure safety for its members and spectators and the police also assists us with the road blocks etc.

**What roles do women paly within the process of Carnival?**

The ladies are involved with the making of the suits and the troupes' costumes; they also participate with the big bands and the dancing

**How much do these costumes cost?**

They cost R350 and they include a hat

**Is the Cape Town Minstrel Association related to the Kaapse Klopse Karnival?**

No not at all they do their own thing and we do our own thing

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**Figure 1.** Bickford-Smith V, Vaneningen E, and Worden N.1999. An early eighteenth century illustration of a Cape farmer supervising a slave with a hoe. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century an Illustrated Social History.* Cape Town: David Philip Publishers

**Figure 2.** Bickford-Smith V, Vaneningen E, and Worden N.1999. *An illustration of Krotoa-Eva.*.Cape Town in the Twentieth Century an Illustrated Social History.Cape Town: David Philip Publishers

**Figure 3.**A still frame from the move *Skin.*2008.www.skinthemovie.net

map of cape town the city - Google Maps

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Address **Cape Town**
**South Africa**

Notes I have marked the Cape Minstrel Carnivals route in the map below. Take note that the District six museum is located on Buitenkant Street, the Slave lodge museum is located on Adderley street and the Bo-Kaap museum is up Wale/Waal street, all these locations are part of the Minstrel Carnivals route in the city.

http://maps.google.com/maps?hl=en&q=map+of+cape+town+the+city&ie=UTF8&hq... 2011/11/06

**Figure 4**.2011. Map of Cape Town city center. www.googlemaps.com accessed on the 5 November 2011

**Figure 5.** *Kevin Momberg spokesperson of the Cape Minstrel Association posing with the attire for the Shoprite Pennsylvania Minstrels.* 2009.Cape Town.Photographer: Zama Nsele

**Figure 6.** *Milliners at work, at the Cape Town Minstrels Association offices, where I interviewed Kevin Momberg the Spokesperson for the Cape Town Minstrels Association*. 2009. Cape Town. Photographer: Zama Nsele.

NEWS

Sunday Times 3

# Kicked-out minstrels cry foul

Performers fuming at claims their annual contest will harm World Cup pitch

'People who have been doing it all these years — and you know, this is a poor man's sport — are now being sidelined by the city'

**Figure 7.** *Kicked Out Minstrels Cry Foul.* The Sunday Times Newspaper article printed on the 20th of December 2009.Davids, N.

**Figure 8.***Voorlopers leading the Atlantis Community Entertainers get the crowd going with hip hop inspired dance steps on Wale/ Waal street.*2010. Cape Town. Photographer: Zama Nsele.

**Figure 9.** *Members of the Atlantis Community Entertainers playing the ghoema drums and carrying an elaborate float:* Cape Town.2010. Photographer: Zama Nsele.

**Figure 10.** *The Lavender Superstars walking up Wale Street towards the Bo-Kaap*. Cape Town.2010.Photographer: Zama Nsele.

**Figure 11.**The Shoprite Pennsylvania Minstrels marching past the Iziko Slave lodge museum on Adderley Street. Cape Town.2010.Photographer: Zama Nsele

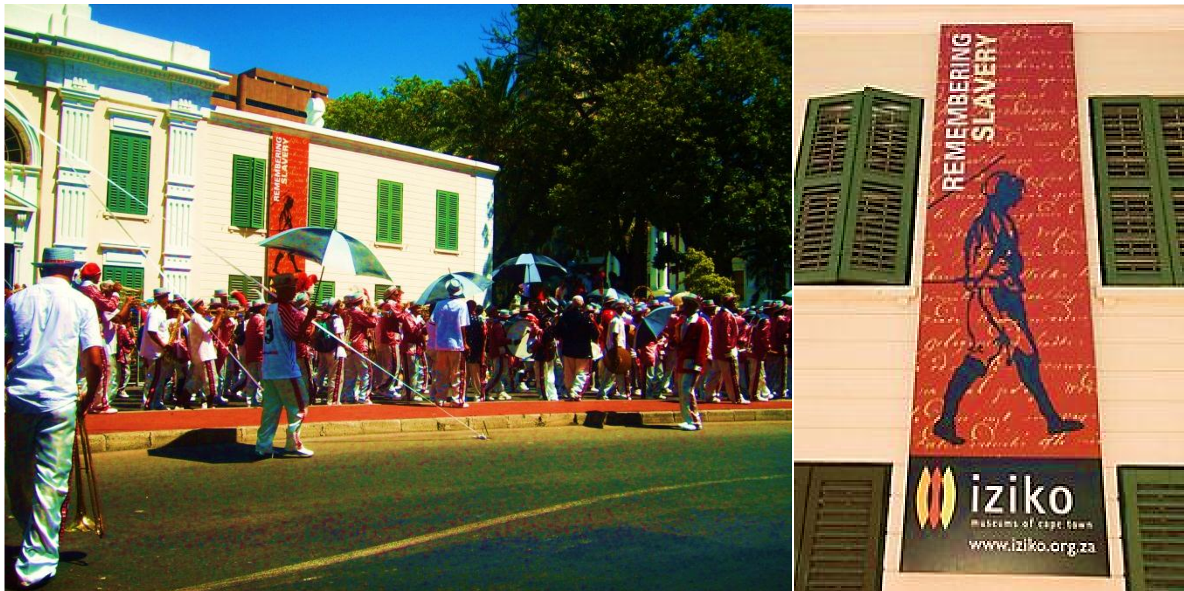



**Figure 12.** *Minstrel troupes marching past the Slave lodge museum, the motif of movement and slavery illustrated in the image close above.*Cape Town. 2009. Photographer: Zama Nsele

**Figure 13.** *An aerial shot of the pentagon shaped Castle of Good Hope where the Ghoema and the Glitter Exhibition took place.* Cape Town

**Figure 14.** *A poster advertising the Ghoema and the Glitter exhibition, across the moat close to the entrance of the castle*. Cape Town.2010. Photographer: Zama Nsele

## GHOEMA & GLITTER

### Secunde Hall- Castle of Good Hope

### 05 June 2010

### 13H00

| | |
|---|---|
| 12h45: | Registration |
| 13h00: | Education department youth programme performs |
| 13h20: | District Six Hanover Street Minstrels start performing & leads audience through to the entrance of the Castle |
| 13h30: | Bloemhof Crusaders Christmas band performs from steps of William Fehr steps |
| 13h40: | Continentals Male Choir performs in back courtyard |
| 13h45: | **Welcome and speeches** |

- MC: Lalou Meltzer *(2 minutes)*
- Welcome: CEO (Jattie Bredekamp) *(2 minutes)*
- Opening Speech – Valmont Layne (speaks about all the genres and history) – *(5 minutes)*
- Second Speech – Sylvia Bruinders (her experience of research and participation the Christmas Bands) – *(5 minutes)*
- Mr Cupido – Christmas bands & marching training (*5 minutes)*
- Close – Lalou Meltzer *(5 minutes)*

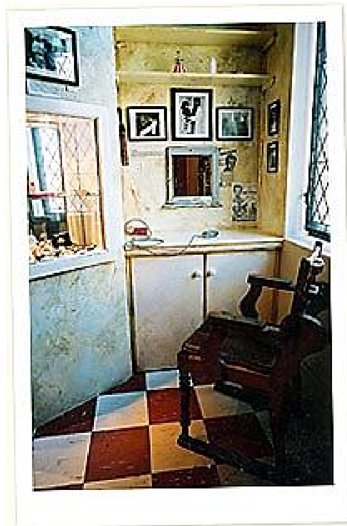
| | |
|---|---|
| 13h:45 | Direct guests to Secunda Hall & Goodhope Gallery |
| | CSM staff (depending on time of late arrivals) |
| 14h10: | Buffet opens |
| 14h30: | Exhibition doors open |

**Figure 15.** *The Continental Malay Choir sang a merry tune before we were ushered in the exhibition space.* 2010. Cape Town. Photographer: Zama Nsele.

**Figure 16.** *The Ajtas and the red devils.* Cape Town. 2009. Photographer: Zama Nsele.

**Figure 17.** *Performers from the District Six Hanover Street Minstrels entertain the crowds at the opening of the ghoema and the Glitter exhibition inside the Castle of Good Hope.* Cape Town. Photographer: Zama Nsele.

**Figure 18.** Children playing on the streets of District six, before the infamous forced removals of apartheid. The permanent installation Streets at the District Six Museum focus on the street as a medium and symbol for the community and communal life .


Barber shop reconstruction

Signing the "memory cloth"

**Figure 19.** Above, ex-residents of District Six signing the memory cloth at the museum. On the right, is a reconstruction of a typical barbershop that would have existed at the District Six.

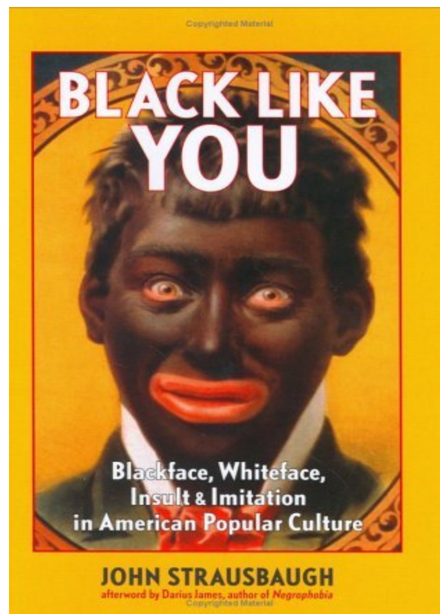



**Figure 20.** Book cover of *Black Like You: Blackface, White Face Insult & Imitation in American Popular culture.* New York: Penguin Group. 2006. Straughsbaugh, J

**Figure 21.** Coon iconography frequently adorned on the covers of sheet music from the 1870's. *Black Like You: Blackface, White Face Insult & Imitation in American Popular culture.* New York: Penguin Group.2006.Straughsbaugh.J.

**Figure 22.** *Bert Williams, one of the first African Americans to perform in Blackface comedy*. New York City. www.mica.edu.accessed on the 12 September 2011.Photographer: Samuel Lumiere. 1921.

**Figure 23.** A cartoon still of Bugs Bunny created by the Warner Bros. *Black minstrels dancing in a cotton field while Bugs sings the Dixie.* www. Freerepublic.com accessed on the 12 September 2011

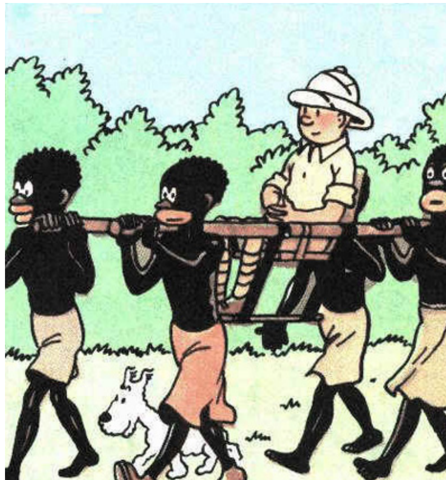


**Figure 24.** *The Adventures of Tintin in the Congo.*London: Egmont Books.2005.Georges Remi.

**Figure 25.** *The Alphabet of Democracy*.2010. Michael Stevenson. Cape Town.www.michaelstevenson.info accessed on 12 September 2011.Anton Kannemeyer.

**Figure 26.**Bickford-Smith V, Vaneningen E, and Worden N.1999.*George Duffs painting of a Cape Town procession on the anniversary of slave emancipation.*Cape Town in the Twentieth Century an Illustrated Social

**Figure 27.** “Coloured” residents of the Cape Peninsula had a tradition of picknicking on public holidays that went back to the days of slavery. *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century an Illustrated Social History.* Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.1999.Bickford –Smith, V. van Heyningen, E. Worden,N.

**Figure 28.** *Orpheus M. McAdoo's Alabama Cake Wallkers, forerunners of the Jubilee Singers (Hampton Institute Archives, Hampton University).* Cape Town in the Twentieth Century an Illustrated Social *History.* Cape Town: David Philip Publishers. Bickford –Smith, V. Van Heyningen, E. Worden, N.1999.

**Figure 29.** Meltzer L, Shanaaz G and Shamila R. 2010. *A Minstrel troupe on the cover of the Ghoema & the Glitter Exhibition Catalogue*. Iziko Museums Cape Town

**Figure 30.** *White Nightmare: Black Dicks.* 2007. Acrylic on canvas 138x 150cm.Anton Kannemeyer.

**Figure 31.***The Peekaboo.* 2010.Ten colour lithograph. Image size: 57.5cm x 57.5cm. Paper size: 57.5cm x 57.5cm.Anton Kannemeyer.

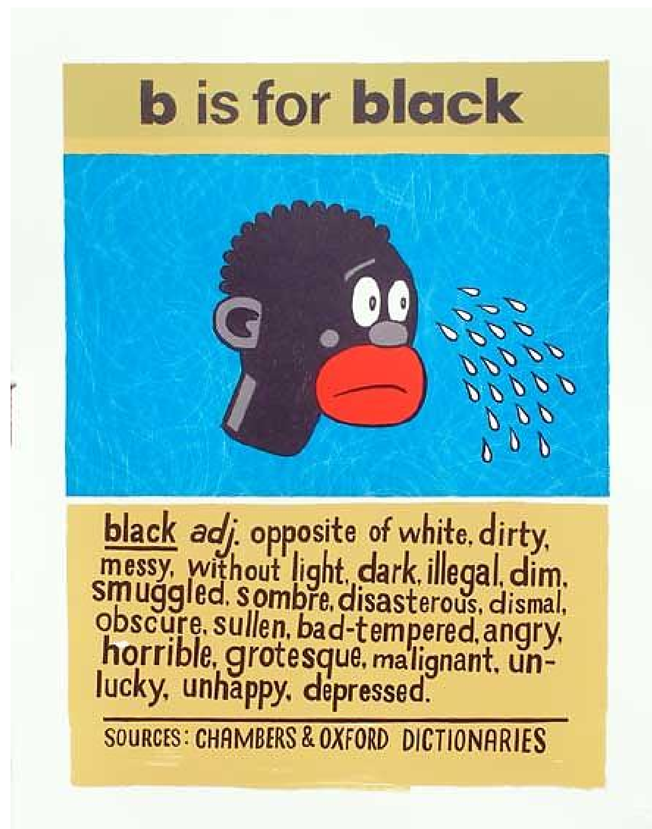



**Figure 32.** *B is for Black*.2008.Six colour lithograph. Paper size: 44 x 57cm.Image size: 37 49.5cm.Anton Kannemeyer.

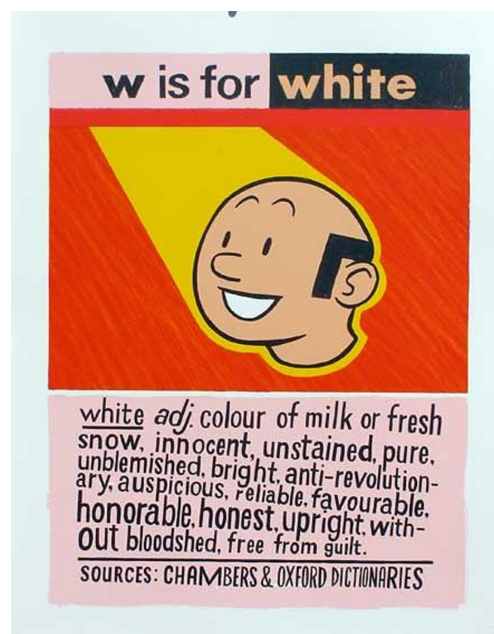



**Figure 33.** *W is for White*.2008. Five colour lithograph. Paper size: 44 X 57cm.Image size: 37 x 49.5cm.Anton Kannemeyer.

**Figure 34.***Anthea Moys with the District Six Hanover Minstrels and Street Band and Everton Nsumbu, during the performance, Deur Mekaar at the Goodman Gallery* 2008. Cape Town.Photographer: Paul Grose

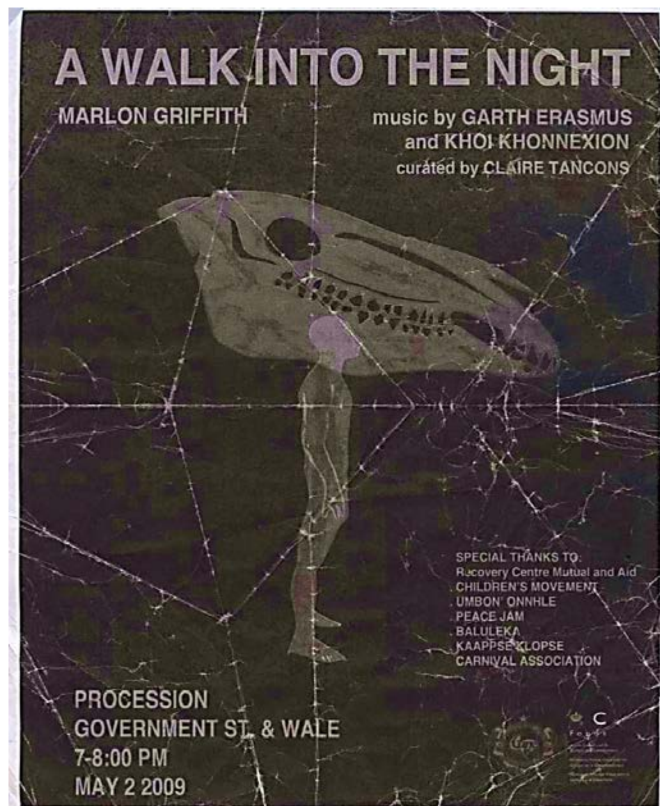




**Figure 35.** A pamphlet flyer advertising *A walk into the night* I received a day before the procession. Cape Town. .2009.

**Figure 36.** *A Walk in the Night procession.* 2009. Government Avenue. Cape Town.Photographer: Mark Wessels.

**Figure 37.**.*A Walk in the Night Procession.* 2009. Government Avenue. Cape Town. Photographer: Wendel Fernandez