

**TENDER TIES:  
WOMEN AND THE SLAVE HOUSEHOLD, 1652-1834**

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**Introduction**

The "important" events in which men were so prominent in colonial history, commerce, legislation and wars, only superficially seem to outweigh the "ordinary" activities which women performed, fashioning garments, cooking, and more importantly, running families and households.[1] But the latter rather than the former constituted the daily round, and, one might add, provided the psychological touchstone of colonial life. There was more truth and pre-Freudian wisdom than sentimentality in the Spanish proverb: "the hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world." [2] In short, the choices women made and the constraints they lived under, shaped the families, households and the society of the colonized Cape.

**The Settler Women and their Slave Women**

To understand the multiple, pivotal rôles of the free women and their slaves in early South Africa, one must first have some idea of their distribution, their numbers - to be precise - their demographic history. European women never appear on the Company payrolls, except as mid-wives or "external mothers [specially appointed guardians of the lodge women]." [3] When adventurous individual Dutch women did disguise themselves as men, joined the Dutch East India Company to come to the Cape, and were caught, they were tried and sent home, even though several male settlers "instantly asked for their hand in marriage." [4] Even rumours of women passengers on the outward bound fleets would be enough for hopeful settler bachelors to throng the quayside to view the "roast pears" as European women immigrants were termed by the Dutch. [5] Only a handful of the Company personnel were allowed to bring their wives and families to the Cape. In short, no women worked for the Company in a full time capacity. [6] Free women at the Cape, like their Virginian counterparts, were supposed to work at home; it was left to free and slave men and Lodge slave women to work in the field and the ditch. [7]

Once the Dutch East India Company decided not to support family immigration into the colony after 1717, the importance of the existing pool of free settler women began to increase, a dynamic process which continued through the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century. After 1717 persistent individual male immigration from Europe made for unbalanced sex ratios throughout the occupied colony, the most unbalanced sex ratios (both slave and free) being in the frontier districts.[8]

Simply put, women became scarce and much sought after. The further inland one went the fewer free and slave women there were. Free women preferred the environs of the market and the port, while the slave women were obliged to live with them. This original pool of settler women comprised only a few hundred wives and daughters of French Huguenots, women from orphanages in Rotterdam, and wives and daughters of the original Dutch settlers and top officials. Slave women, on the other hand, were imported from the East Coast of Africa, Madagascar, the Indonesian archipelago and India right up until 1808. Perhaps 15,000 slave women were imported into the Cape in all. The few hundred free women imported prior to 1717 constituted the main demographic pool of settler women, compared to several thousand male servants of the company and the even more numerous free male settlers. The demographic results may be clearly visualized in a comparative graph of the sex composition of the free and slave populations over time.

## The Cape Inheritance System

The scarcity of members of her own sex had several important consequences for the typical Cape settler woman. Demographic realities empowered the early settler women, and to a lesser extent their slave women. All free women benefitted from the Cape inheritance system, whereby widows received half of their spouse's estate, the other half being divided among the children. This form of inheritance enhanced the social position of Cape widows considerably. In colonial New England, by contrast, the entire estate went to the children and the widow, who rarely remarried, was lucky if she retained a room in her former house, and was sometimes ignored by her own children. [9] In practice the Cape widowed spouse struggled to maintain the integrity of the landed estate, selling off the movables to pay out the heirs' share. Perhaps it was a coincidence, but as settler women became less scarce in the nineteenth century, the Cape widow's share of an estate fell to a third and a child's share. Nevertheless, widows became for a particular phase of their life some of the principal landholders of the colony: in that phase they exercised their next marital choice carefully and skilfully.[10] In conformity to colonial Virginian but in strong contrast to New England patterns, nearly all Cape settler widows quickly remarried and became a principal channel of accumulating capital in the colony.[11]

The Cape settler women's *de jure* legal position as minors under metropolitan Roman Dutch law was at odds with their *de facto* colonial demographic scarcity. As a consequence of this scarcity and the particular system of inheritance, the economic and social position of settler women became much stronger than it was in Europe or in other colonies such as early New England and even, one hazards, Virginia.[12]

Widowhood was the most empowered phase of the Cape woman's life, since she was not under the influence of her male spouse and could make independent and judicious marriage and other life choices. For instance, widows sold or manumitted more female slaves than other group. Were widows, accustomed to having a dominant patriarchal spouse "to run" the slaves, unable or unwilling to manage their slaves on their own? Was the institution distasteful to them as it was to some settler women of the Antebellum South? [13] Was manumission of slave women by free women a genuine, ultimate expression of domestic affection, or were widows, in selling slaves, simply avoiding some of the probate problems of the Cape succession system? [14] Reformed Christianity, too could have played a part in this process: Cape women were more likely to be church members and communicants than the Cape males, a similar gendered orientation to the church to that of colonial New England's women and widows.[15] Conceivably widows felt a need to express their piety, by the profound act of freeing another woman. Possibly all these reasons provide parts of what must remain for now a complex explanation of why Cape settler women in their widowhood rid themselves of their slaves through manumission or outright sale when they could.

## The Uterine Descent of Slave Status

One of the most sweeping changes to affect life in all the European colonies was that children came to follow the legal status of the mother, not the father. For instance, in all the North American colonies (except briefly, Maryland) the legal condition of the mother predicted the status of the child.[16] All individual state legislatures passed such legislation. The evolving American legal system was a colonial reversal of the rule of English common law that the status of the father determined the status of offspring. Virginia was typical: the House of Burgesses passed a law in 1662 which stipulated: "Whereas some doubts have arisen whether children got by any Englishman upon a negro woman should be slave or Free, Be it therefore enacted and declared by this present grand assembly, that all children borne in this country shall be held bond or free only according

to the condition of the mother..." [17] This was in keeping with the logic of the colonial saying that "Motherhood is a matter of fact, but fatherhood is a matter of opinion." [18] The main purpose of all such legislation was to thwart claims of freedom being made on behalf of miscegenated slave children.

The Cape system was always based on uterine descent since Roman law, not English common law, was practised there. A set of laws passed on 10 April 1770 in Batavia, part of the comprehensive *Statutes of India*, attempted to address the more flagrant cases of the reproductive exploitation [19] of women slaves in all Dutch colonies of the Dutch East India Company. A specific article stipulated that if a woman slave lived in concubinage with her European owner then she and all children of that union should enjoy manumission at the death of the father/owner.[20] The law was not observed. Cape slavery in the matter of maternal slave descent worked in the same way as the American colonies, the only difference was that in America the legislation had to be introduced. Uterine slavery at the Cape, as in Virginia, was the final solution to the problem of miscegenation with the slave population. Free fathers of slave children had to buy their freedom: both free and slave status did not follow patrilineal but uterine descent.

Sources before 1770 indicate that Cape settler women allowed their female slaves to be maintained, housed and even paid by male European inhabitants, usually of the officer class, such slave women being known at the Cape as "courtesan slaves," i.e. slaves who lived not in the household of their owners, but with their free lovers.[21] Since the condition of slavery was by uterine descent, all offspring of such unions still belonged to the absentee owner and remained their slaves.[22] Despite the loophole provided by the 1770 Statutes of India, this custom was not abandoned. By the early nineteenth century, we learn of in-house courtesan slaves being widely used in Cape Town: Robert Percival, an English officer at the Cape in 1804, wrote of one Cape settler woman who forced a slave woman to have sexual intercourse with a male house guest by pushing the shy slave into the bedroom and locking the door: "The Dutch ladies have no reluctance to their slave girls having connections with their guests, in hopes of profiting by it, by their being got with child." [23] A few years later Samuel Hudson, an English slave owner, observed that it was the male owners who directly took advantage of their domestic women slaves [24]:

I know one Gentleman - if he can by such conduct deserve the name - that at the time I left the Colony was considered among the richest of the Inhabitants, held one of the first situations in the English Government was generally respected. Yet this very Man at his first outset was in possession of a white (or nearly so) Slave. He had children by this Woman several [of] which as they grew up from their color were considered very valuable. The connection continued with her own children and even with his Grandchildren. My very nature shudders whilst I relate this horrid trait of beastiality [sic] in a Man in other respects <highly> respectable. This is a well established fact and it was always remarked Mister W \_\_\_'s [ellipsis in original] Slaves were considered the finest in the Colony and were they brought to the Hammer would fetch extravagant prices. Many of them had all the features of Europeans not with [out a] tinge of their Ancestors' complexion. Several of these Girls were let out by the Month to Europeans who made them Servants of all work. But from the cunning and artfulness of their behaviour too generally became Mistresses and expensive ones in the end. Under these circumstances all children from such connections are born Slaves. Many of whom remain so when every Man certainly has it in his Power to prevent This Shamefull badge by giving a hundred

Dollars to the proprietor at the birth of the Child. But they calculate on the chances there are of Its dying and some bold blooded Mortals look with indifference on the fruits of this shameful prostitution.[25]

Few Cape women slaves availed themselves of the escape hatch provided by the Statutes of India for good reason: local slave owners and the local court system would not allow such simple access to freedom. Steyntje of the Cape, a creole slave, was the solitary person who brought a successful civil suit under this statute. Her ordeal illustrates just how difficult it was to prove parenthood in those pre-scientific times. She suffered through more than ten years of humiliating court appearances before she obtained freedom for herself and her various children, all fathered by different settler owners. But Steyntje was an exception: an extraordinary person of great personal charm, courage and beauty, judging both by the number of her female friends who testified on her behalf, the number of settler wives she displaced and the number of European men who vied to buy and possess her. One Danish captain was so smitten that he offered to buy her on the spot and take her home, tout suite. The case became a *cause célèbre* which ultimately went to the Privy Council in England; all the court papers, revealing among other things a passionate *ménage à trois*, were published in 1827 for a Cape Town audience who must have been truly agog to wade through the 179 pages of court proceedings.[26] Bearing Steyntje's very public ordeal in mind, one must conclude that Cape slave owners up to the 1820s, the final resolution of her case, felt free to exploit their slaves reproductively and moreover, that some owners preferred their slaves to be of European descent, even if this meant fathering them themselves. Near total freedom to exploit slave women reproductively was widespread as Hudson claimed, writing on the eve of the Steyntje episode:

The mixture of Europeans with the Slave Girls of the Colony has produced a race perfectly white which are in high esteem - each Family priding themselves in the fair complexions of their Maids and Youngers. 'Tis too frequently the case that their Masters & Mistresses encourage these connections to improve their breed of Live Stock & many an English Countenance you may perceive running through the Streets of Cape Town without shoe or stocking - the badge of slavery and a reproach to some of our Countrymen in not having released them from the bonds slavery.[27]

Whereas seventeenth and eighteenth century Cape practice was for some miscegenating free fathers to free their slave offspring, by the nineteenth century, some only took a pride in the "whiter" complexions of their slave establishment. This change seems to mark a degradation of parental values and attitudes, but might also reflect the steep rise of slave prices after the abolition of the slave trade. Whatever the reason, one can conclude that property rights in persons had won over parenting impulses.[28]

In an anthropological sense some married owners therefore lived entirely polygamously with free wives and slave concubines in the same house, with some predictable domestic dramas resulting, such as the incident Hudson related in 1806:

A farmer in the district of Stellenbosch of some repute had frequently had some serious quarrels with his wife respecting a slave maid who unfortunately happened to be more desirable than her mistress which had caused heart-burnings and jealousy and many severe chastisements when ever opportunities offered by the absence of the husband. At last matters arrived to such a pitch that this furious woman was determined at all events to rid herself of this encroacher upon her rights by the most cruel and unheard of piece of barbarity.

Her husband was in the field being with his slaves in cultivating his ground at a considerable distance from the house. This poor wretch had been baking and had just taken the hot bread from the oven when her merciless mistress came into the kitchen and accused the girl of being with child by her master. She denied it & assured <her> tyrant that he had never taken any such liberty with her. Frustrated by her denial, she vented her fury on the poor wretch who patiently bore the cruel treatment of the devil in human shape, not content with beating her maid unmercifully, she called in a strong boy [i.e. slave] who was employed about the house and made him hold the maid whilst she crammed hot bread down the throat of the unfortunate slave `till she had choked her. The poor boy begged of his mistress to forbear, that the maid was dying. 'So much the better!' said the hardened wretch, 'I have now my wish.' The slave actually died under the fangs of this harpy. Not content with having taken her life, she cut her open to be convinced whether her suspicions were well founded or not - where slept the thunder at this awful moment? [29]

Even after the revolutionary Batavian administration (1803-1806) and the subsequent second British occupation, the Cape persevered with the uterine descent of slave status, as Article 83 of the general codification of Cape Slave law in 1813 stated, basing itself squarely on Roman precedents: "The children of a female slave born previous to the time prescribed for [manumission], or pending the fulfillment of the condition, are slaves." [30] The imposition of English colonial rule should have introduced English common law with its emphasis on patrilineal descent. This would have been quite revolutionary for the Cape slave society: as it was the British acquiesced to local custom and Roman Dutch legal practice.

By 1822, this new Cape custom of not freeing miscegenated slaves had resulted in a new type of slaves, or as one contemporary official, W.W. Bird ambiguously put it a "class" or a "race" of slaves called "the Africander." He elaborated: "The Afrikander women are the favorite slaves of the mistress, arranging and keeping everything in order, and are entrusted with all that is valuable, -- more like companions than slaves; but the mistress rarely and the slave never, forget their relative situations, and however familiar in private, in the presence of another, due form prevails." These Africander slaves held themselves separate and distinct, as Bird concludes: "The Africander slave girl would consider herself disgraced by a connection with a negro, or the production of a black infant." [31]

Since the condition of slavery remained based on uterine descent at the Cape through all the various occupations, Dutch, British and Batavian, the manumission of a slave woman remained a profound act, freeing not only the slave women, but also her children and their offspring for perpetuity. [32] However, the sex ratio of the manumitted slave population at the Cape increased in the nineteenth century, i.e. fewer women were manumitted than before 1808.

We must conclude that free fathers increasingly became content to leave their slave offspring in bondage, examples of emergent social values before the age of the Great Trek.

### Family Size and Age at Marriage

The most fundamental change for women transplanted from Europe was that they tended to marry younger and consequently bore more children than their metropolitan

counterparts. A useful departure point for examining the demographic changes which the transplanted female population underwent is to establish the respective sizes of the families in their European and colonial contexts: we need unambiguous "before" and "after" pictures. Because most Cape families had migrated from Europe, sometimes leaving some family members behind in the trauma of migration, the early Cape family size was, according to the local censuses of the 1680s, slightly smaller than the average family size in Europe of the same period.[33] But, after the first generation, the family size of settler women changed dramatically. The colonial transformation may be exactly measured with one group, the Huguenots, whose clearly distinguishable French names on the ships' passenger lists and later on the censuses, have been linked to form clear "before" and "after" family distributions.

Further, aggregate analysis of all the Cape censuses between 1658 and 1821 indicates that the French Huguenots were typical of all free settler women: there was a dramatic increase in the numbers of sons and daughters in every free group of European descent; but, significantly, not among the slave population. This can be clearly seen in a comparative graph of the percentage of each population under sixteen years of age, the most revealing comparison of settler and slave demographic histories.[34]

One notices from the graph, the change in behaviour after 1700 and after 1808. This is partly explained when we turn to an independently and differently collected series of data and the more exact results of a new family reconstitution study of approximately 1,300 families in the first hundred years of the early Cape, the number of children born to the average settler women increased from 5.3 children in the generation of 1705, to 6.2 children for the generation of women in 1731, an average of one extra child in one generation.[35] Such changes in demographic behaviour did not go unnoticed by contemporary European observers. As early as 1710, Peter Kolbe, the German naturalist and astronomer, was moved to comment, in the language of his time, on the reproductive efforts of the transplanted European settler women:

The *European* women in the *Cape-Colonies* are generally modest, but no Flinchers from Conjugal Delights. They are excellent breeders. In most houses in the Colonies are seen from six to a dozen Children and upwards; brave Lads and Lasses with Limbs and Countenances strongly declarative of the ardor with which they were begotten.[36]

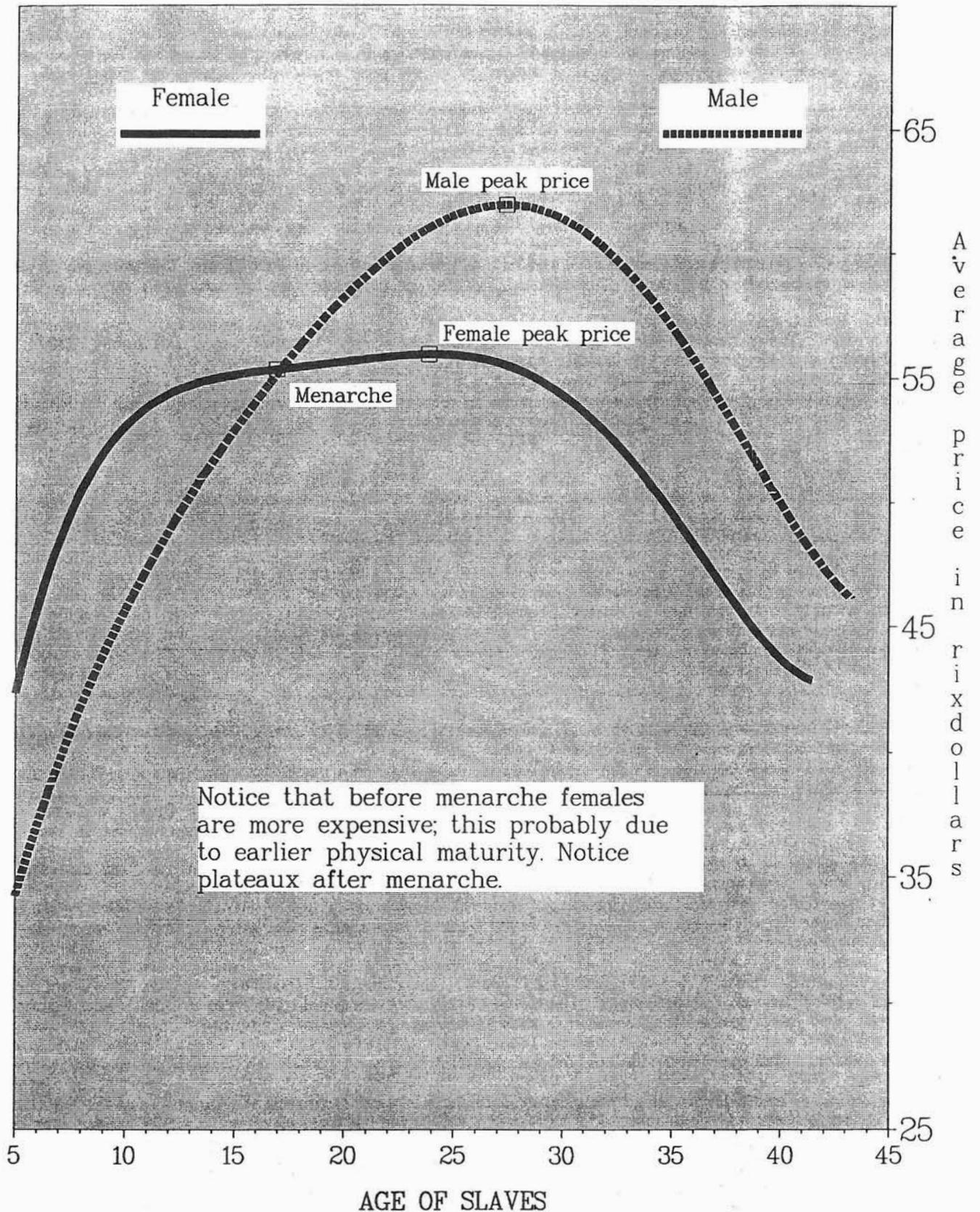
Colonial life, then, entailed several consequences for the settler woman. The most important demographic consequence is that the Cape settler women, like their counterparts in colonial America, began to marry much earlier than women in Europe. The age at first marriage for Cape women dropped from European norms, resulting in a longer period during which it was socially acceptable to bear children. Contemporary travellers were shocked at the early European Cape marriage pattern. For instance, Kolbe hinted that a 14 year old European mother was nothing unusual at the Cape.[37] This practice continued at the Cape until the early nineteenth century at least. Samuel Hudson remarked in 1806: "Marriages take place when the parties are very young. Warmth of Climate gives warmth of Constitution and Prudence on the part of the Parent seldom throws any Obstacles in the Way of the young people." [38] The Cape settler women married at a much younger age than colonial New England women, who since Thomas Malthus's time have been regarded as providing bench marks of early marriage and high fertility.[39]

Traditionally, demographers have seen the age at first marriage as a key index of economic opportunity within the society.[40] Simply put, when times were hard, people waited longer to get married. Because of the favourable economic conditions, based on land availability and the Mediterranean climate at the Cape, settler women were marrying earlier than was the case in any comparable European society. Not only were women marrying earlier, but more were entering into marriage. Or as demographers put it: the

# PRICE OF SLAVES BY AGE AND SEX (1680-1731); N = 4,076

Showing differential pricing structure for male and female slaves

Sources: D.O. Slave transfers; CAD: Obligation en Schultbrieven



nuptiality rate of Cape women had risen from contemporary European norms of 90 percent to almost 100 percent.[41] Few, if any, Cape European women remained spinsters in this period.[42] In short, there were few economic constraints on settler women marrying at the Cape.

The Cape settler women then, departed from what John Hajnal, the influential demographer, has termed the "western European marriage pattern," i.e. late marriage and a low nuptiality rate.[43] The Cape settler women conformed to the typical "East European, or Asian," marriage pattern where early and universal marriage was the rule for women. The difference between the two patterns had arisen because of different economic constraints. In Western Europe the demographic regime of late marriages and a part of the population never marrying were consequences of economic constraints on fertility and nuptiality. Marriage was delayed until the individuals concerned attained sufficient capital to buy their own land, farm or house. In Eastern Europe, by way of contrast, land was collectively owned or worked, so its actual possession was never a constraint on individual behavior: on the contrary, the availability of labour was a constraint on working the land. So, Hajnal argues, Eastern European societies tended to maximize output by maximizing the number of their children. At the Cape land was readily available and the unbalanced sex ratios ensured that nearly all women would get married. This combination led the Cape settler women to conform to the Eastern marriage pattern, although the underlying causes were quite different. The net result of a higher proportion of colonial settler women marrying, and marrying earlier, was a rapidly increasing settler fertility, a pattern distinctly different from contemporary European and more pronounced even than North American colonial trends.[44]

Because of the small pool of original (pre 1717) woman settlers, there arose an astonishingly high degree of family intermarriage when the settler family is considered in its matrilineal aspect. By this I mean looking at Cape families in terms of mother-lines. The Cape genealogists do not do this, they arrange all their data in patriarchal form, termed the Stamvader (tribal father) approach. [45] The degree of such inter-family marriages among Cape settler families increased. A wide and complex range of interlocking credit and mortgage obligations further tightened settler family bonds.[46] The high rate of debt in the capital-starved early Cape, partly a result of over-investment in slavery and the flight of local money into the oceanic slave trade, also ensured that these sinews of family interdependence became stronger.[47] The Cape settler society rapidly became a "tangled cousinry," to borrow a neologism from the distinguished American historian, Bernard Bailyn in his apt description of seventeenth-century Virginia. As one can learn from the Cape genealogists, almost every settler family was related to every other at the Cape.[48] Samuel Hudson, who prided himself on being an after dinner raconteur, illustrates through one of his feeble jokes just how widespread intermarriage had become by the first decade of the nineteenth century:

In this Colony intermarriages are so frequent that the whole of the Inhabitants are related. I recollect when General Janssens first took upon him the Government of the Cape of Good Hope [1803] he was consulting with a very worthy Friend of mine, a Mister Rhenius, concerning the necessity of new-modeling the constitution and if possible indicating the vices and corruptions of the generality of the People. An Herculean labour it would have proved. 'How', cries His Excellency 'is this to be done?' My friend whose penetration was equal to the goodness of his heart said: 'General, this may be done by banishing root and branch four of the principal Families of the Cape: The Van Reinens, the Cloetetz, the Bredaus and the Exteens.' Now these Families were so interwoven with each other and with nearly the whole of the Colony that there must have been a general clearance. This the Governor was convinced of and gave up

## the Attempt.[49]

The Cape settler family then, became larger, more interconnected, and more clannish than their counterparts in Europe or even colonial America. Cape settler women gave rise to a new social order in the colony: within two generations they had dramatically changed the demographic patterns of the respective home countries they had left behind. A new organization of the basic building block of society, the family, had taken place. The extended, matrilineally interrelated Cape family had emerged, which would continue to evolve and to provide the inspirational bedrock of future settlers' expectations of domestic life.

### Household Size

If completed family size changed dramatically, the change in household size was also evident from early on. For the purpose of this study, the census household included all people on the immediate property of the head of household, but also included people on a second and sometimes third property. From the second generation the census household size of the settler family had been large, more than one and a half times as large in 1680 as in contemporary Europe [50]:

Table of Family and Household Size in the 1680s:

<u>Date: 1680</u>	<u>Family Size</u>	<u>Household Size</u>
Metropolitan	3.12	3.72
Colonial	3.10	5.40

After some fluctuation occasioned by the arrival of the French Huguenots (1688-1701) and a smallpox epidemic of 1713 the mean household size (family plus servants and slaves) was almost as big again as the mean family size. Household size reached a peak in the late 1730s, then dropped after the measles epidemic, that period compounded by a severe depression, 1742-1754, and then remained relatively constant until 1808. This can be seen in graph showing the household size superimposed on the family size.

### Slave Fertility

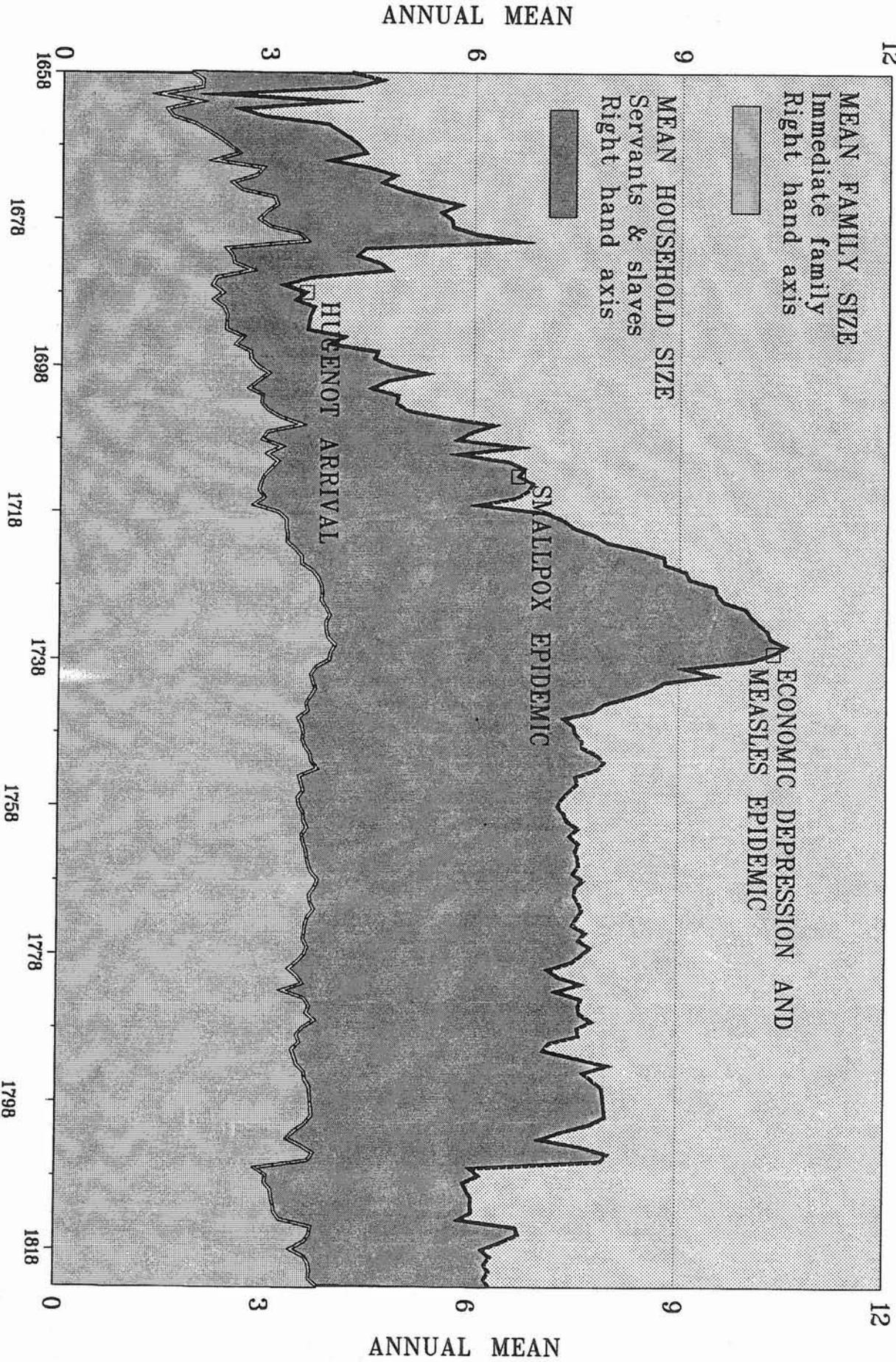
#### *The wet nurse and the nanny*

The Cape household size was larger partly because of the presence of a few indentured servants [51], but also because of the domestic incorporation of slaves, especially female slaves. There are two important points to understand about the female slaves at the Cape. First, there were very few of them relative to their male counterparts. The Cape adult slave sex ratios were among the highest ever recorded for a slave society, averaging between 720 to 150 males per 100 females, depending on location and time.[52] Second, those few female slaves were always kept in the house: according to Mentzel, a special place was reserved for them in the kitchen, next to the fire; one slave claimed she always slept outside the door of the master's bedroom.[53] According to Graham Botha the slave women slept inside the house, outside the door of the mistress' room.[54]

That the Cape household was boosted by the presence of female slaves is not only an arithmetical point but a biological one. The introduction of slave women into the homes of the settlers paved the way for the rise of the slave wet nurse and nanny at the Cape. In this way slave women were not only brought into the bosom of the family, but actually became in a literal sense the bosom of the settler family. As one can readily understand

# COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY SIZE: 1657-1824

12



Sources: Annual Censuses, 1657 to 1824 (Hague: AR VOC; Cape VC)

there are considerable evidentiary constraints on identifying occupations of slaves in such a remote period. Nevertheless, quite different types of primary evidence endorse both the existence and importance of the Cape wet nurse; for example, many of the requests for manumission of slave women mention that they were or had been nurses or even "foster mothers," and were considered "part of the family." [55] Seventeenth-century requests for the right to return to Holland often included the price of the passage for the wet nurse. For example, Joan Steen, the Fiscal of the return fleet of 1692, needed a wet-nurse, minnemoer, for his suckling child and paid the passage for her. [56] The first indication that female slaves were being used inside Cape homes for the care and welfare of the settler families comes in 1713 in the first smallpox epidemic at the Cape, when Theal, an early historian of South Africa noted:

In May and June there was hardly a family in the town that had not one sick or dead. Traffic in the streets was suspended, and even the children ceased to play their usual games in the squares and open places. At last it was impossible to obtain nurses, though slave women were being paid at the rate of four to five shillings a day. [57]

It would seem that the early settler women had learnt some of the secrets of *lactation amenorrhoea* sometime around 1713, perhaps from the eastern possessions, perhaps from their slaves: Simon Schama has convincingly shown that wet-nursing was frowned upon in metropolitan Holland at this time. [58] Mothers who do not lactate, or inhibit lactation, as the Cape settler women did, ovulate more frequently than women who are lactating. Kolbe provides direct evidence for the inhibition of lactation when he claimed that the majority of Cape settler women had devised various ways to stop lactation and were always complaining bitterly about soreness of their breasts. So prevalent was this phenomenon that Kolbe devoted several pages to the horrible effects of the various local procedures. [59] It is not surprising that Cape settler women (whose lactation stopped) and wet nurses (who hardly ever stopped lactating) had such different fertility rates. This difference in fertility is due to the production of the hormone, prolactin, during each episode of suckling, a hormone which effectively inhibits ovulation. During lactation there is a period of natural infertility, which varies depending on local customs of nursing. The condition, termed lactation amenorrhoea, can continue for eighteen months, even as long as two years with one child. [60] A wet nurse who suckled her own child for (say) eighteen months and then her mistress' child for a similar length of time might experience a protracted period of infertility. The generally accepted maximum period of suckling without further conception is four years. Such infertility is not constant, or reliable, but does appear statistically significant with aggregated statistics over the long term. This explanation, implausible as it first appears, is part of the solution to the riddle of the extremely high fertility of the Cape settler woman (circa 1700 to 1807) and the hitherto unexplained low fertility of the slave women at the Cape, who inhabited the same disease and domestic environments and shared the same or similar diets.

The starkly different fertility rates of settler and slave nurses were linked by the suckling process. While the slave women were nursing their own and the mistress's children, they were less likely to conceive. Conversely, the Cape wet nurse, by lactating for the biological mother, ensured that the biological mother would be ovulating sooner than if she were breast-feeding. Therefore the biological mother's post-partum amenorrhoea would be over sooner, the birth intervals between her children shorter, and the net result would be that she would tend to have many more children than her female slave. Demographers have suggested that the use of community wet-nurses explains why the Hutterite women in North America have the highest recorded fertility rate. [61]

While it is patently impossible to identify wet-nurses individually, one can still make some crude approximations using slave transfers and data from the household censuses. Analyzing the purchase order of Cape slaves by individual owner, for example, provides

some circumstantial evidence. Settlers never purchased a female slave as their first slave; slave women typically appeared as third or fourth slave in a listing of over 5,000 slaves (1658-1731) sorted by individual owner, sex of slave and date of purchase. Moreover, that nearly all slave women were generally purchased by the wealthier colonists who were just married, or about to have a child provides further oblique support for this explanation of Cape settler and slave demography.[62] Aggregated data from the census also suggests wet-nurses. In 1719, for example, the number of heads-of-households who owned adult female slaves, among whom there were some wet-nurses, was 179, the number without any female slaves, 601. Those households which reported female slaves had, on average, more than twice as many settler children. This can be more easily visualized in a table [63]:

Table suggesting settler fertility increase due to presence of female slaves in the census households of 1719.

<u>Date: 1719</u>	<u>Number of Homes</u>	<u>Number of Settlers' Children</u>	<u>Child/Head-of-Household Ratio</u>
Homes without female slaves	601	627	1.04
Homes with female slaves	179	384	2.15

Such a table is not wholly conclusive; wealth, for example, or some other variable might explain both the coincidence of the greater number of settler children in households and the presence of slave women. There also might have been some wet nurses and nannies among the indigenous people brought into the poorer households, but no sources mention this until 1811, and the census takers failed to record any indigenous people until 1798. [64] Perhaps the evidence from the birth intervals, or child spacing is more convincing: despite the slightly later age at first marriage for the 1731 cohort of settler women, their completed family size was larger, not smaller. After the first dramatic drop, the age at first marriage rose. In 1705 the average age at first marriage for settler women at the Cape was 17.2 years, in 1731 a generation later, 18.5 years, but the 1731 cohort of settler women had a larger completed family size.[65] The presence of slave wet-nurses in the household best explains the shorter birth intervals of the 1731 settler women.

Mentzel, writing of a decade later, informs us that the Cape slave nurse and slave nanny was common, that she was there to assist at the birth, and that she suckled the child. While the parents and sponsors walked ahead to the church, the nurse carried the settler's infant to be baptized. Later, the nurse was also the child's companion when it was time to go to school. In this period, the rôles of mid-wife, wet nurse and nanny were all performed by one slave woman. "Such a slave is very well treated," Mentzel noted and added: "In addition to good food, she gets many presents with the prospect of manumission for good service in the bringing up of several children." [66] Mentzel here provides the second and perhaps the most important part of the explanation of the low fertility of the slave women: a statistical artifact. Slaves who were manumitted, i.e. those who joined the free population, tended to be women and children. Such manumitted women were mainly in their childbearing years (i.e. 16-40 years old). They left the census "slave" population and were henceforth recorded as "free" making it appear that all the remaining census slave women had fewer children.[67]

The most frequent mention of the wet nurse occurs in the requesten of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: they had to be mentioned since their fares and their manumissions had to be arranged. For example, Diderik Johan Schook, a Fiscal, asked permission in

1755 to take Mina [Nurse] of Batavia to Holland as "a nurse for his infant"; Frederick Wilhelm Storch, a burgher asked in 1778 for a passage for the female slave Melatie van Maccasser for his "infant, Otto." [68] The repatriating owner was often prepared to pay the passage for a slave wet-nurse and her compulsory manumission costs, since all slaves became free when they reached the Netherlands; taking a wet nurse to Holland was therefore a considerable financial sacrifice. [69] If a repatriating family could only afford one slave passage, that slave would in all probability have been the family wet nurse. [70] The most illustrative example occurs in 1789 in a lengthy paternalist request from a Cape slave owner, concerning the manumission of two generations of wet nurses in one family:

Hendrik van der Graaf, Captain-Lieutenant of Artillery has notwithstanding every effort, not been able to find any other wet nurse for his infant boy than the female slave of the Company named Catryn, the daughter of Hanna, the daughter of Catryn, who has been given by you [the DEIC] in service to the Reverend Christianus Fleck, minister of the Cape Congregation. She has been born and educated in the house of memorialist's late father-in-law, the Rev. John Frederikus Bode, to whom as well as her mother, Hanna, gave so much satisfaction with their services and conduct, that the collective children and heirs of memorialist's father-in-law, from an upright sense of obligation, addressed themselves to your honours, in order to exchange Hanna, for a strong male slave, manumit her [Hanna] and give her her liberty. This was graciously conceded by you, and given effect to by the heirs, memorialist proposes with your permission to repatriate with his wife and child in the expected return fleet, but he will be prevented from doing so if he cannot take a nurse with him, on whom he can implicitly depend. For that purpose he would by preference, chose the aforesaid Catryn, because his wife is very much attached to her and also because of the great care which she has hitherto shown to her nursing and which (the infant child) now always claims marks of grateful acknowledgement. Memorialist therefore prays to be permitted to exchange Catryn for a healthy male slave, and to pay for her child the usual amount in order to manumit both. [71]

The author of this request and his father were two of the more literate members of the colonial community, members of the patrician class of Cape Town. Perhaps, many of the other families who manumitted women slaves were unable or unwilling to express themselves so volubly.

### The Decline of the Cape Slave Wet Nurse

The *requesten* stop in 1806, but so too do the travellers' mentions of the Cape wet nurse. Hudson who would never have failed to mention a topic such as wet nurses only affirms the importance of the Cape slave nanny for the first decade of the nineteenth century, noting that:

the young children are generally placed with the female slaves, few [settler women] taking upon themselves the office of mother. This in my opinion lays the first foundation for all the vicious habits they contract of them: caresses and instances I could bring forward when the licentious curses of these domestic slaves are considered more by these discarded children than [those of] their real mothers are ... the first thing

they learn then, is to deceive the parent and keep their intercourse with their enamerados [72] a secret so that by the time they are able to discriminate they are initiated into all the mysteries of duplicity and not frequently of dishonor ... [73]

It is awkward to argue from silence, but it would appear that as the abolition of the slave trade in 1808 approached, the wet nurse function was gradually abandoned for the very good reason that all slave women were needed to produce slave offspring exclusively. The only legal supply for slaves after 1808 was by birth, i.e. from those women slaves already in the colony. Slave wet nurses do not completely disappear after 1808, but instead of them being a dedicated part of the typical Cape household, they could be hired. For instance, *The Cape of Good Hope Gazette*, the official newspaper, ran the following advertisement in 1829:

TO LET: a healthy Wet Nurse, without a child, about 8 months from her child bed, being also a clever seamstress, and irons well ... [74]

John Thomas Bigge, one of the Royal Commissioners at the Cape in 1820s, opined that as a result of the prosperity of the colony, the hiring of slave wet-nurses had become popular.[75] The most compelling evidence that they continued to be a factor in the nineteenth century, comes from the testimony of an ex-slave, Katie Jacobs, who in her 96th year recalled that when she was freed in 1834:

My first child died in infancy. I was a healthy woman, and as my missus was in rather delicate health, I became foster mother to her first-born son and heir. During this time I was well looked after, and became one of the family; that is, I was made to sleep on the floor of the dining-room near the bedroom door to be at hand when the baas wanted a drink [of milk]. My missus wept at the idea of my leaving her. 'No; you must stay!' she cried. 'Think of my son, whom you have suckled and nursed, and who has now grown so fond of you.' [76]

However, in the slave compensation lists of the 1820s, which were compiled with actuarial accuracy, only a tiny percentage of all women slaves were registered as "nursemaids." [77] The occupations of all female slaves may be seen in the following pie diagram derived from these sources: only a small number can be classified as nurturing occupations, not a single "wet nurse" is mentioned, but since wet nursing was only part of the female slave's job, perhaps this is not conclusive.

1808 therefore emerges as a possible turning point for the history of slave women in the colony; after that date they were no longer adjunct mothers to the settler families, but mothers in their own right. The prevalence of the slave wet nurse at the Cape between 1713 and 1808 goes a long way to explain a) the breath-taking growth of the settler population b) the failure of the slave population to reproduce itself until well after the oceanic slave trade was stopped in 1808 and c) the presence of wet nurses in the household as part of the explanation of the Cape tendency to manumit female slaves in high proportions. One may conclude that the female slave between 1713 and 1808 played an important role in the reproduction of the settler family which simultaneously had real demographic implications for all Cape slaves: a restriction in the fertility (1700 to 1808) and also changes in census behaviour for the slave population.[78] So important was the wet-nurse to the slave society that two words entered the colonial creole language, viz. "*minnemoer, mina*" (love-mother) and "*aiya*" (old nurse-maid), words which have survived.[79]

## **Diet, Venereal Disease, Abortion and Infanticide**

Other factors possibly limiting slave fertility such as poor diet, venereal disease, abortion and infanticide are mentioned rarely in the sources; it is consequently difficult to estimate their effects. Diet does not seem to be a factor for the early period (1657-1808) when slave women were part of the domestic household, where they shared and often prepared the meals; even in the nineteenth century many were cooks and most had household occupations.[80] Since venereal disease resulted in corporal punishment, few of the afflicted would come forward voluntarily.[81] According to Victor de Kock, an early historian of Cape slavery, if a person guilty of infanticide was brought to justice through the agency of a slave, the informer was manumitted, besides receiving a sizeable reward of two hundred Rixdollars; on the other hand, punishment for offenders was severe. For example, a female slave who strangled her half caste child was tied up in a bag and consigned to the waters of Table Bay.[82] A slave might well think his or her freedom worthwhile for betraying a slave mother guilty of infanticide, but none came forward, at least as far as the detailed manumission records show.

The vehemence with which a single infanticide was mentioned in legislation suggests that the latter, at least, was rare in the eighteenth century, perhaps more common in the nineteenth century when reporting of this increased.[83] In 1806 Hudson wrote: "I am credibly informed by people of respectability that prior to the English first taking the Cape of Good Hope many a poor Unfortunate babe found a Grave in the Sea from inhuman depraved Mothers." [84] For the later British period, one notes the desperate case of a slave woman, who took her children "four in number, down to the sea, where she succeeded in drowning three of them, and was in the act of destroying herself and the remaining child when she was discovered." [85] One officer in the 93rd regiment claimed to have seen the bodies of no less than thirteen infants corpses lying on the Cape Town beach. In response seventy-four Cape Town Ward masters swore that there had only been eight dead infants found in the urban areas since 1795 and others signed separate depositions stated that only two rural infanticides were uncovered in the same period.[86] Infanticide also did occur in other slave societies, but Eugene Genovese suggests that infanticide, at least in the American South, was "not a major problem." [87] At the Cape too, there is little evidence that it played a major, or even significant, role in reducing the count of new-born slaves, but the practice assuredly existed.

## **Miscegenation**

The psycho-sexual implications of the slave nanny and especially the slave wet-nurse is a matter of high controversy in the literature on slave societies. Gilberto Freyre, the currently unfashionable but original, social historian of Brazil, has argued that the sexual preference for black women among sons in slave-holding families in the Americas was a direct development of the intimate relationship of the white child with the black wet nurse.[88] But the evidence for his theory rests on anecdotes: he never establishes the statistical presence of wet nurses. Nevertheless, according to Freyre, in Brazil there were cases of European men who not only preferred blacks, but were "incapable of enjoying themselves" with white women. Freyre tells the story of a wealthy and important rural family of Pernambuco, who were unable to arrange a marriage for their son, for the well-known reason that he only "wanted" blacks.[89] C R Boxer quoted an eye witness account of the Dutch invasion of the same region of Pernambuco in 1637, when "many of the pot-bellied sugar planters fled southward with their pretty mulata mistresses riding pillion behind them, while their neglected white wives struggled, disheveled and barefoot, through swamp and scrub." [90] Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy has pursued similar lines of argument in his account of the importance of the nanny in Victorian Britain, where he hinted that the attraction of the younger gentry for women of "lower class" origin is at root based on the prior relationship between the infant squire and his "lower class" nanny.[91]

We may never know whether the presence of wet-nurses, or more simply domestic propinquity, contributed to such racially exogamous sexual behavior. Still, there is considerable analogous evidence that the well-to-do Cape slave owning families, like some of their counterparts in Brazil, perceived similar "problems" with their sons' adolescent sexual orientations and behaviour. Mentzel noted:

Wealthy ... Boys who, through force of circumstance, have to remain at home during these impressionable years between 16 and 21 more often than not get entangled with a handsome slave girl belonging to the household. These affairs are not regarded as very serious. The girl is sternly rebuked for her wantonness, and threatened with dire punishments if she dares to disclose who was responsible for her condition; nay, she is bribed to put the blame on some other man.[92]

One woman slave took an exquisite revenge on her master who had shown little restraint in his youth. Her ex-slave-owner complained to an English visitor, Lady Duff Gordon, in 1862 of the misery he had undergone as the result of the "ingratitude" of his former "slave-girl," Rosina, with whom he had two children when he was a youth. After the emancipation of slaves in 1834, Rosina used to stand outside his house and "read the [emancipation] statute in a loud voice on every anniversary of the day." Every time she met him on the street, she kissed him "by main force," exclaiming: "Aha! when I [was] young and pretty slave girl you make kiss me then [sic]; now I ugly, drunk, dirty old devil and free woman, I kiss you!"[93]

Such inter-racial sexual behaviour was not confined to the young males of the colony. Domestic propinquity within the household sometimes led to sexual encounters between the young adolescent settler daughters and their male slaves. For instance, in 1695 a slave, Jan van Batavia, made love to a 14 year-old settler girl, Adriana van Jaarsveld, who was staying in the Drakenstein home of his owner. The slave was severely punished and banished from the colony.[94] On a spring morning of 1712 at 7 a.m., after the field slaves had left for work, Robert van Batavia, the household slave of Gijsbert Verweij, attempted to seduce the 17 year-old granddaughter, Neeltje Olivier, while she was, according to the accused, provocatively squatting on her heels mashing rice to feed the chickens.[95] The background of the situation as revealed by the voluminous documents of this case disclose that he had been watching her on several similar prior occasions. The ensuing verbal exchange, centering around the word "melkert [custard pie]" was sufficiently ambiguous to suggest that Robert was given at least some encouragement. While the full extent of these domestic interracial liaisons may never be known - after all nobody at the Cape could profit by recording such events - they do crop up from time to time in the crime records, the daily fort journal, and even the austere church records.[96]

The most spectacular such case was between the 24 year-old Maria Mouton from Middleburg in Zeeland whose love affair with her slave, Titus of Bengal, resulted in the woman, with several other slave accomplices, murdering Franz Joost of Lippstadt, her husband of eight years standing, on the 31st of January, 1714.[97] The Cape court sentenced Titus to be publicly impaled through the anus until death resulted. While impaled he was given a flask of rice brandy [Arack] by one of several onlookers, one of whom duly chided him lest he become too drunk. The diarist recorded Titus's answer: "It did not matter as he sat fast enough and there was no fear of falling." The diarist of this event concluded: "It is true that whilst sitting in that deplorable state, he often joked, and scoffingly said that he would never again believe a woman." [98]

Very rarely did a liaison between an adult settler woman and a slave man reach historical visibility in the church records. However, on the twenty seventh September 1716, the distant Drakenstein Church council decided:

From widely circulating rumors, and despite repeated admonishments, it was clear that Van Bruel's wife was living a very evil [seer boos] life with her slave and that she was consequently called before the church, and told that unless she desisted and sold the slave, she would be excluded from the communion.[99]

In her defence, reminiscent of St. Augustine's human plea "Let me be chaste, oh Lord ... but not yet," she said she would comply, but, as her husband was having difficulty selling her slave paramour, would the church be patient? [100] Mentzel recorded a case later in the eighteenth century, at Salt River, near Cape Town, where the settler proprietress of a wine shop gave birth to a black child. She declared to her quite well-educated husband, and every-body else, that she had been frightened by unexpectedly meeting a black slave.[101] The overall impression though, is that such liaisons between adult settler women and slaves were rare.

Travellers noted them too, but their anecdotes should be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt, since it must have been so tempting to titillate metropolitan readers with such prurient tidbits. Mentzel provided the most balanced account when he claimed such unions were more common in the town, where "they were not so strict," than in the country. [102] Karl Peter Thunberg, the Swedish botanist visiting the Cape in the 1770s, mentioned that "the daughters of the colonists are sometimes with child by their father's black slaves. In this case, in consideration of a round sum of money, a husband is generally provided for the girl, but the slave is sent away from that part of the country." [103] Anders Sparrman, Thunberg's fellow countryman and a far superior source, also provides an anecdote of this form of sexual liaison, but the general impression is that these travelers were trying to titillate their readers and that there were few such liaisons.[104]

Most reports of miscegenation at the Cape concern the lodge slave women. How the lodge slave women perceived potential sexual partners is a difficult question. The detailed crime records rarely provide a glimpse. Attitudes have perforce to be inferred from behaviour, reconstructed from the baptismal records [105], and also deduced from European commentary originating outside the walls of the lodge. [106] According to these sources, if the women slaves of the settlers were coerced by their mistresses to make love with European visitors, this did not apply to the lodge slave women. According to several independent sources, their reputed slave "husbands" forced them to sleep with visitors, both settlers and the famous "lords of six weeks," those soldiers and sailors who had money and only a short time to spend it in the "tavern of the seas." As early as 1686, Ambrose Cowley, an English visitor to the Cape, claimed the lodge "husbands" were easily persuaded to offer their "wives": "If a slave of the Company's should have a mind to have carnal knowledge of one of their women, let him but give her husband a bit of Tobacco-Roll of about three inches long, he will fetch her forthwith to the slave and cause her to lie with him." [107] Mentzel, who actually delivered salt to the Lodge and was thus one of the few settlers to pass through the Lodge's portals, confirms Cowley's accounts, namely that male slaves actually forced their partners to take a European lover.[108] Elsewhere he suggests that not all lodge women were "loose"; those that were, however, scrupulously insisted on advance payment from their patrons. [109]

There is another interpretation of these accounts of the lodge women, namely that the initiative lay with the women. In 1686 a freed female slave informed the Governor that under the promise of marriage she had borne one of the soldiers of the Company four children. She had frequently asked permission from the Council to marry the soldier. The court resolved that the reputed father was to support the children and that he was never to be permitted to marry anyone else.[110] Many travellers and other sources emphasized that Lodge slave women willingly courted European sexual attention. For instance, according to the genuinely pained Political Council members in 1681, the slave women in

the lodge flaunted their European lovers in public: "dancing, stark naked even on Sundays, in full aspect." [111] Charles Lockyer, who visited the Cape in 1711, claimed that: "There is little notice taken of the sailors who lodge in their rooms, and as for the women themselves, they are so fond of white children, that they would willingly have no other, whence the breed is highly improved, many of them being as white as Europeans." [112] Johan Daniel Buttner, a doctor who stayed at the Cape in the 1720s, also remarked on the mixed race children in the Lodge, the result of willing miscegenation from "men of many nations." [113] The most compelling evidence comes from the church records: the independent church scribes reveal that Company slave women took great pains to drive a genealogical stake into the baptismal records of the colony, always naming their invariably absent European lover as the "father" by providing an embarrassingly exact patronym. [114] Whether the slave women were coerced by their slave spouses, or were willing partners, the result was the same: what Mentzel later termed an entire "mestiço class" in the lodge. [115]

Were the slave women of the lodge being defiant of the growing racial order by flaunting their European partners, or simply establishing for their offspring the best possible chance in a colony where the advantages increasingly depended on a light skin colour? If the society became increasingly racially based in the colony, than the genius of the lodge women lay in their success in making that association as difficult and troublesome as possible for the ruling order; by flaunting European fatherhood, they also put their slave spouses in their places. But, above all these considerations, by securing a European lover they provided their offspring with immediate and incomparable civic advantages. No better example of this can be found than Manda Gratia (origin unknown), a matron in the lodge in 1714, who married a burgher, Guiliam Frisnet, and managed to free nearly all of her previous offspring, one of whom promptly joined the Dutch East India Company and set sail for the East Indies. [116]

### Slave Marriages

Slaves were never allowed to marry each other. A slave woman who by habits of devotion and fidelity had attached herself to a slave man was termed by local officials "*wijfie*", that is, a female of any animal species, not the cognate word "wife". [117] Even under the Batavian administration, which ruled between 1803 and 1806, and was ostensibly inspired by the ideals of the French revolution, the Cape marriage board, after obtaining the names and addresses of the couple, asked each of the respondents: "Are you a Christian, and not a heathen or a slave?" [118] Robert Semple, an English visitor to the Cape, informs us that by the first decade of the nineteenth century slaves had devised their own ceremonies, completely independent of the colonial order. [119] By the 1820s Muslim *imams* were routinely performing marriage ceremonies for all slaves who wanted to be joined in matrimony. [120] By 1822, those not choosing the Muslim marriage rite simply dubbed themselves man and *vrouw* (=wife) and observed total fidelity. [121] Legally sanctioned slave marriages had to await the successful passage of the *Nineteenth Ordinance of 1823*, but then such marriage-bound slaves had to be Christian and few slave rushed to the Christian altar, which had been so long closed to them. Eight years later only three (sic) legal, i.e. Christian, marriages among 35,000 slaves had been solemnized. [122]

From the outset of the Dutch occupation, all half-breed females in the lodge were encouraged to marry "a man from the Netherlands," who would first be expected to pay back the cost of upkeep and education of the slave women, then to free her, and finally marry her in the Christian church. The process of settlers formally marrying Company half breed slave women was common enough for the Company to resolve to exact compensation from the bridegroom, who was, after all, acquiring property from the company. Not all bachelorsettlers could afford this expense. Consequently, there are several examples of ante-nuptial contracts, whereby the settler or soldier promised that

should his slave bride die before him and not have any heirs, he would leave half of the estate of the marriage to the Company as compensation for the education and upbringing of his slave bride. As can be seen from the following extract from just such a contract, the process of metamorphosis from slavery to freedom and incorporation into the settler family - so dramatic and strange to us - was carefully monitored just as any other humdrum accounting transaction:

... Andries Oelszen, free settler at Stellenbosch presently intending to marry Sara van de Caap, the Company's half-breed slave, declares that in the event of his bride's pre-deceasing him and in the event of her leaving no legal heirs, that a half of the estate, including land and movables, should be given over to the company, at the death-house [*sterfhuijsje*], before the debts of the estate are settled, to acknowledge and pay off the Company's rôle in bringing up and feeding the abovementioned bride ... [124]

According to Van Reede's racial and actuarial calculations in 1685, a mulatto woman slave of 22 years of age cost 150 guilders.[125] European males were often willing to pay.[126] Full-breed women slaves, on the other hand, had to wait much longer for their manumission.[127] Officials obviously presumed that no European would want to marry a full-breed, since no provisions were made for such an eventuality, one source even claiming these unions were "illegal".[128] Because of the long-term shortage of women at the Cape, half-breed company slave women had a good chance of being married to a European - and this was encouraged officially at the same time as regulations were promulgated against concubinage with full-breed slaves.[129]

### **The Statistical Incidence of Marriage of a Free Person to a Slave**

Recent research on miscegenation in the antebellum South has eschewed any reliance on anecdotal sources.[130] This new practice of concentrating on using and quantifying primary records has now caught hold in South Africa. Thanks to the careful genealogical work of the Historical Institute at the University of the Western Cape we know that only two liaisons between a "full-breed" or mulatto[131] ("half-breed") male slave (or freed slave) and a settler woman ever resulted in marriage.[132] The interracial runaway couple celebrated in André Brink's famous South African novel, *An Instant in the Wind*, was disappointingly based on an Australian story, not a Cape incident, despite the deliberately misleading factual preface.[133] One must remember that there was no law against a settler woman freeing a mulatto slave and marrying him, only an increasingly powerful custom not to do so. Cape settler and free black men freed and married slave women regularly. One must conclude that Cape free women never "married down" in the increasingly racially and status conscious Cape, an attitude entirely in keeping with other European slave societies.[134] The one choice women traditionally had - the marriage choice - although truncated, was resolutely exercised at the Cape.

These early but very rare domestic liaisons between settler women and male slaves should not be regarded as evidence of racial fluidity in the colony, as some scholars suggest. All such encounters were forbidden by statute and harshly punished if and only if the perpetrator were slave, male and "black." For example, the courts did not sentence any European settlers to death for concubinage with, or rape of, a slave, but the same courts did sentence many male slaves to banishment or death between 1658 and 1795 for the merest suggestion of a sexual advance to a settler woman.[135] For example, Jan of Batavia, who had made love to a settler girl, was sentenced to be scourged and banished to Mauritius, there to be chained for 20 years, while Mrs. Bruel, the amorous European settler woman, who lived a "very evil" life with her slave, was only barred from church communion for her transgressions.[136] The language of a 1705 death sentence for a

Stellenbosch house slave, who tussled with a European farmer's daughter, discloses that the disparate status and race of the partners bore heavily against the accused in such liaisons: "and that [this crime was perpetrated] by a black slave on a free girl of European breed &c.."[137] The predominance of male slaves in the colony, many of whom had little heterosexual gratification, coupled with intimate daily domestic contact with settler women, relationships which had begun in infancy, probably increased the likelihood of these "forbidden fruit" encounters.[138]

In the early years of the colony (1652-1717), the most common route to complete incorporation of the slave into the settler family was the formal marriage of a mulatto female slave to a bachelor settler or Company employee. Typically, such a slave was first baptized, then manumitted, and only then married to the settler, sometimes her former owner. Thereafter, the ex-slave became the mother of his family and acquired full burgher status. The ubiquitous Bassons, for instance, all descend from Ansiela of Bengal, a household slave of the first Governor, Jan van Riebeeck.[139] Ansiela married Arnoldus Willemsz Basson, a visitor to the van Riebeeck household, in 1669, and bore him seven children, in addition to some she had borne before.[140] Over 1,000 self-styled "Afrikaner" families were surprised to find in Hans Heese's recently published *Groep sonder Grense* (Community without Boundaries) that they are descended from female slaves in the first generations of conquest (the humiliation of the descendants was so intense they promptly took the impoverished genealogist to court in a million Rand law suit). Heese's identifications have been tabulated in the following graph and compared to the number of adult slave women who were manumitted. The quite independently collected data match very well. Many women who were manumitted were marriage bound. The superfluity of manumissions over marriages may be explained by the slave nannies and wet nurses, a possible, but highly conjectural take on their numbers.

The choice of such slave marriage partners was not random, and here racial and sexual preference based on origins weave themselves into the household. Settlers had specific qualities in mind when they chose slaves as marriage partners. For example, of the 191 slave women who married or lived with men of German descent in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the majority (59.7 percent) were creole (Cape born), possibly mulatto. The next largest group of slave spouses was from the Indonesian archipelago (22.5 percent); 15.2 percent of the slave wives came from India, all from Bengal. Perhaps the most stunning difference lies in the final category. Full-breed Malagasy women and the tiny contingent of African slave women, who together constituted a large percentage (18.6 percent) of all the imported Cape slave women, comprised less than 3 percent of these wives. German settler men preferred mulattos over "full-breeds" [141], and slaves from certain regions over others.[142] These findings are fully in accord with what the historian of the Dutch Caribbean, Hermanus Hoetink, has called the preference for the "somatic norm." According to Hoetink, spouses preferred their partners to resemble themselves in body type and skin colour.[143] But cultural affinities and linguistic factors must have played a part as well. For example, the preferred creole slaves, having been born in the colony, would also have spoken Dutch as their first language, whereas imported Malagasy women did not.

But in contrast to Hoetink, George Bataille, the French anthropologist, has observed that opposing somatic features also fired the erotic imagination.[144] This was sometimes the case in the Cape, as Anders Sparrman confirmed in the Cape hinterland of the 1770s of at least one Hanoverian immigrant:

I arrived in the evening at a farmhouse, the bailiff of which welcomed me in the most friendly manner, with a hearty slap of the hand, in the African style. He entertained me with milk, and an account of his love affairs and intrigues ... He also gave me a scale or list (which by his desire, I took down in my pocket book, as the result of his own experience) of the

constant order of precedence in love which ought to be observed among the fairest sex in Africa: this was as follows. First the Madagascar women, who are the blackest and handsomest; next to them the Malabars, then the Bugelese or Malays, after these the Hottentots and last and worst of all, the white Dutch Women.[145]

Despite such male sexual preferences (we unfortunately know too little of the female slave's sexual preferences), inter-racial sexual liaisons, and finally even marriages became increasingly embarrassing to Cape settler society, especially to the free women, even though many had slave ancestry. Attitudes to free black women became increasingly antagonistic. Even on such matters as dress, the settlers wished to curtail the activities of freed slave women. In 1765 the local authorities took notice of the tiny contingent of the colony's 118 free black women [146], who by their dress, placed "themselves not only on a par with other respectable burghers' wives, but often pushed themselves above them". The all-male Political Council, perhaps prompted by settler women, deemed such behaviour "unseemly and vexing to the public"; henceforth no free black women were to appear in public in coloured silk clothing, hoop skirts, fine laces, adorned bonnets, curled hair or even ear rings.[147] Emancipated female slaves in everyday aspect were ordered to wear no other material but chintz and striped cotton and "being well-behaved, if christened, [or] married and at other occasions in church, [to wear] a habit (*kledje*) of black silk." [148]

A few decades later, Lady Anne Barnard, the wife of the second-in-command of the colony wrote in 1798, the apogee of interracial marriages, of one pretty quadroon bride-to-be who was being ostracized by the Dutch settler women so pointedly that she ultimately left the colony: "the Dutch ladies will not visit her, I dare say, she has a dash of the *Blew*, her mother's mother having been a slave, & as we are as proud as *Lucifer* on point of birth there is no quality or virtue not even the *virtue of being rich* which is not spunged [sic] out by the word slave born or half cast." [149] This seeming contradiction represents a head-on clash between evolving racial attitudes of the time and the demographic reality of the shortage of European women at the Cape. Basing arguments about miscegenation (and indirectly race relations) at the Cape on the marital trajectories of the Colony's few slave women should not be regarded as evidence of racial fluidity. In those regions of the colony where European women were more numerous, the incidence of miscegenation and interracial marriages declined proportionally. According to Hans Heese's detailed tabulations, just over 1,000 ex-slave and indigenous women married free burghers of European descent in the period 1652-1795, while only two male ex-slaves married free women of European descent.[150] When we remember that 65,000 slaves were imported into the Cape and almost an equal number were born into slavery, we must conclude that the chances of a slave entering the ranks of colonial society was small, highly gendered, and moreover, declined.[151]

### Attitudes of Women to their Slaves

Attitudes of the settler women to the slaves in their household varied over time: I conjecture as the function of the wet nurse declined approaching the year of 1808, these attitudes deteriorated, but the development of these attitudes is by no means straightforward. Despite the importance of the female slave to the settler population it is at first astonishing to find that female slaves on the auction block did not obtain on average high prices, contrary to what several European observers claimed.[152] Here the quantitative data and the travellers' accounts are in contrast. An analysis of the distribution of slave prices by age and sex reveals that female slaves were more expensive than their male counterparts only until the onset of menarche, after which they reached a price plateau, clearly lower than the corresponding male price curve. Research on this topic in America confirms that pre-pubescent female slaves, who were more skilled at

agricultural pursuits than similarly aged males, also obtained higher prices at the auction block until menarche. The Cape age/price curves, which one can clearly see in the following graph, allows for just such an interpretation.[153]

Menarche, heralding the risks and costs of pregnancy, rendered slave women on average less valuable than men of similar age. Despite the key domestic position of slave women in Cape slave society, the early [154] slave age/price distribution does suggest that owners did not value adult female slaves highly. Perhaps the gruff Cape slave-owning males, who were mainly the buyers at slave auctions, simply took such items as nurture for granted.

Supporting this line of thinking, the sale transfer documents reveal that they bought male slaves from the oceanic slave trade in such high proportions that the Cape slave sex ratio was among the highest in the colonial world.[155] But there is another possible explanation: the settler families rarely allowed wet nurses or their nannies to reach the auction block for sentimental reasons: these, the most valued slaves, were rarely if ever sold. If they were sold in the sale of a distressed estate, they did fetch high prices, an auction drama which might have caught the attention of travellers. Most of those slave women who were up for auction were possibly reject slave women, perhaps infertile, perhaps "too truculent" for their owners. Such a conjecture would explain the anomalous price differentiation, but the theory faces a heavy sea of conflicting evidence.

What we do know thanks to other types of sources, is that settler girls were brought up deeply imbued with the slave-holding ethos. For example, Mentzel noted that settler parents encouraged even their youngest daughters to inflict domestic punishment on the slaves.[156] In contrast, Sparman noted that some slaves refused to "be disciplined by the weaker sex. Many a master and mistress of a family who have happened to forget themselves with respect to this point, have ... been made to pay for this mistake with their lives." [157] Sometimes the adult mistress would physically assault her female slave: in 1833, on the eve of emancipation, Colonie, the 30 year-old housemaid on the farm "Boschijemans Vallei" near Waaihoek, complained to the protector of slaves:

that on a certain morning in the course of last week she was unwell and could not attend to her usual work, that about 8 o'clock her mistress ordered her to clean her shoes, which Colonie did and brought them to her bedroom, which she then began to clean, while she was busy therewith, the mistress was angry that the hall was not clean and on entering the bedroom began to beat Colonie with the fist upon her head and mouth and knocked out one of her teeth.[158]

What is most important to realize and appreciate is the expectations and limits on behaviour which the slave owning society started to inculcate in the young women both slave and free. An anonymous British officer indicated that the inculcation of slave-holding values had deepened by the early nineteenth century so that: "accustomed to be surrounded with female slaves from their infancy, they [young settler women] no sooner begin to move, than they find they are not allowed to assist themselves, but have attendants at their call, over whom they are soon taught, by the powerful examples they see around them, of exercising the imperious tones of command; this, by degrees, is confirmed by habit, and carried with them into active life, when they become mothers in their turn." [159] Samuel Hudson, writing of the same period, observed that young settler women had high expectations of a gift of slaves at their maturity and marriage and also took the services of household slaves entirely for granted: for instance, ambitious society brides of Cape Town in the 1800s insisted on an "establishment" of slaves as part of their marriage settlements:

my lady must have at least, if she is of any consequence, two boys for her [sedan] chair ... In addition to these [two boys] she

must have a boy as an errand boy. But sometimes a girl is thought more suitable for this purpose as she can be easily initiated into the grand secret of confidential service by acting upon all occasions with more tact, and from her sex having the power to introduce herself into the families of her mistresses' friends and [there] learning the whole domestic concern of the establishment. This is a consideration not to be overlooked by a young woman beginning life.[160]

Robert Wilson, an English officer visiting the Cape in 1806, was more sympathetic to the settler women and their attitude to slaves: "although the European mother prefers her own race, she would think herself unworthy to be a parent if she could neglect an infant or not treat it with kindness because it was the offspring of a slave." [161] Analysis of slave sales and manumissions also sheds a kinder light on the attitudes of settler women. Adult settler women, at least the widows, manumitted or sold their slaves much more frequently than did their menfolk; moreover, settler women manumitted adult slave women more than any other group. Generally, the impression one gains of the attitudes of free women to their own slaves is one of maternalism, sometimes genuine affection (expressed best in the manumission records), but largely unleavened with compassion or sympathy with their housemaids' triple status as woman, servant and slave.

## Conclusions

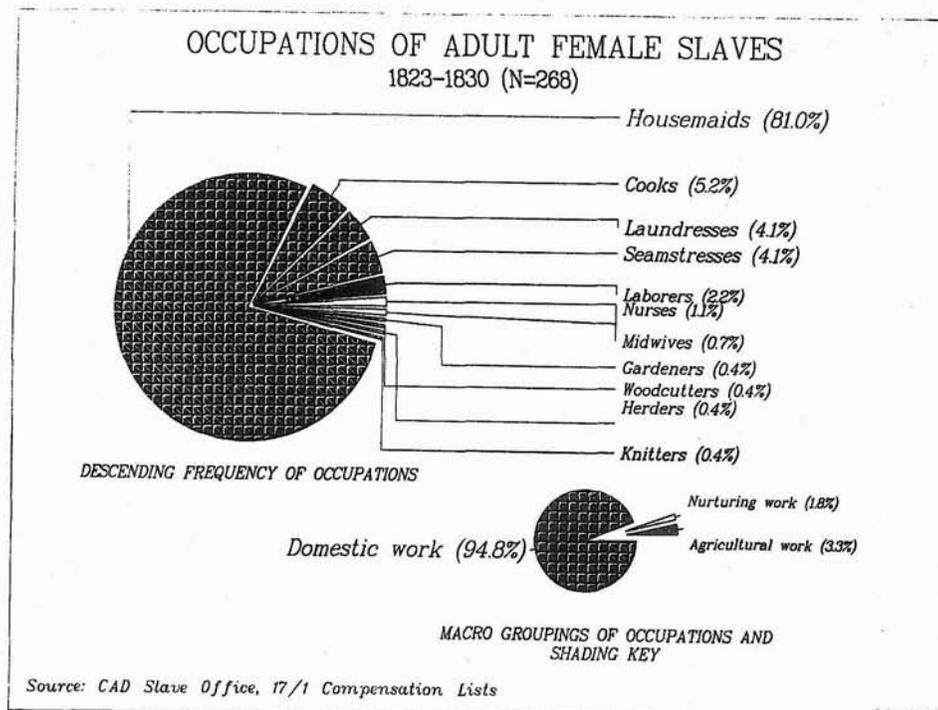
Critical conclusions of this chapter are that the settler women came to occupy a commanding social position both because of their scarcity and because of the particular system of partible inheritance at the Cape. The shortage of settler women in the short run empowered them to maintain their dominant position in the long term. There was, for instance, at the Cape what E.S. Morgan, writing of Virginia has termed a "widowarchy," with some Cape widows remarrying as many as three times and acting as a conduit of large fortunes. Because of their enhanced social position, Cape settler women nearly always married up the social scale. Only two male slaves or free blacks, as far as can be ascertained, married settler women of direct European descent. There is also some evidence that free women increasingly ostracized free black women on grounds of racial or slave descent. In short, settler women took advantage of their own scarcity to empower themselves and to help forge and maintain the colony-wide hierarchy based on racial descent. Although there were sympathetic individual gestures of settler women to slave women, on the whole these gestures were matriarchal, statistically insignificant and did not present a challenge to the regime of Cape slavery.

Slave women in the orbit of the settler women were well treated on a day-to-day footing, in so far as they were brought into the household and became part of the Cape family. However, they were sometimes sexually exploited by male owners as concubines and often reproductively exploited in their respective capacities of wet nurses and after 1808 as breeders of slaves. Some gender deference was shown to the slave women in that they enjoyed considerable favours in the settler household denied to male slaves: they had tasks not in the fields, but within the house. If slaves were present in the main household at night, those slaves would in all likelihood have been the slave women. According to a variety of sources, both literary and quantitative, Cape settler slave women busied themselves with nursing and child care, crochet, embroidery, sewing, knitting, laundering, and cooking, hardly ever agricultural work.[162]

In this respect Cape slave women were differently treated than their rural counterparts in the American South who were required to do heavy agricultural work. The Cape slave women were always manumitted proportionally more often than their male counterparts, but this favourable ratio dropped, although it was never inverted, after 1808. Slave women, once baptized, stood an incomparably better chance than slave men of being

incorporated through a formal Christian marriage into the ruling hierarchy. Freed slave women often entered colonial society and enjoyed all the perquisites of settler status, while freed slave men (with only two exceptions) remained "free blacks". Slave women had a clearly perceived stake in the system and they made use of all their advantages, but after 1808 their function as wet nurses declined and the scarcity of all women became much less of a problem. Opportunities for slave women to become free and therefore have free children declined in the nineteenth century. In all these ways, both notions of gender and sex undercut the potential for slave solidarity at the household level. From the outset of occupation, slave women were more closely woven into the settler family household than were slave men. In the period up to 1834, the cultural and emotional influence of the slave women on the settler family far outweighed that of the male slaves. Perhaps for this reason, it was the individual slave women of the settlers who often betrayed slave rebellions, or went running to the owner when there was "trouble." There seems little change in the individual slave woman's identification with the owner's household. For instance, even after the general emancipation in 1834, Katie Jacobs, stayed with her owner's family, despite her husband's entreaties and the couples' erstwhile dreams of an independent existence, as she put it: "Finally, my husband gave way, and we remained at the farm for three or four years." [163]

The slave women, and there were exceptions, identified with the settler household rather than with their slave status. In the early period, they were often the surrogate mothers of the slave-owning class, sometimes, in the cases of marriage to a settler bachelor, the real mothers of future creole settlers: over 1,000 women of slave and indigenous descent married free persons of European descent and passed into the "master" class. The relatively few slave women held a privileged, but hitherto unrecognized, position in the colony. Their influence over small and large matters in the daily lives of the settler family was significant. Because their lot was domestic, their legacy was vast, one of an unfathomable psychological magnitude. But they were intimately suborned into the domestic hegemony of the settler family and household and their very womanhood sacrificed to the domestic interests and predilections of the settler men and their families. However, Cape women, slave and free, tended to consolidate the slave society rather than present a challenge to its injustices. In the slave holding household, the slave women were the "insiders", while the slave men remained the "outsiders." Women, whether free or slave, proved indispensable in the complex web of production and reproduction that constituted the changing Cape slave-owning household.



## Notes

- 1 William Cronon *et al*, "Women and the West: Rethinking the Western History Survey Course", *Western Historical Quarterly* 17, No 3 (July 1986), pp 269-90, esp p 275. I am grateful to Stanley Engerman for reading a previous draft of this paper.
- 2 Joseph Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal Man* (Cambridge, Mass., 1975) translated by Thomas Wiedemann, p 109.
- 3 See, for example, A Hulshof, comp., "Compagnie's dienaren aan de Kaap in 1685", *Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 63 (1942), pp 347-69.
- 4 Donald Moodie, *The Record* (Cape Town, 1960, reprint), 18 June 1687, p 421; F Valentijn, *Description of the Cape* (Cape Town, 1971), 1, p 208; K Jeffreys (ed), *Kaapse Archief Stukken Lopende over het Jaar 1779* (2nd February 1779), p 288.
- 5 Leonard Blussé, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Providence, RI, 1988), pp 160-612.
- 6 *Ibid.*, pp 172-73.
- 7 Morgan writes: "For reasons not altogether clear, English women were not ordinarily employed in growing tobacco or other work on the ground." In E S Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York, 1975), p 235.
- 8 Based on tables of settler and slave sex ratios by region in Elphick and Shell, "Inter-group Relations", p 128.
- 9 Alexander Keyssar, "Widowhood in Eighteenth Century Massachusetts: a problem in the history of the family", *Perspectives in American History*, 8 (1974), pp 89, 91, 93-94, 111-12, 117.
- 10 Cape Town: Deeds Office property transfers, Transporten en Scheepkennis (1658-1838).
- 11 L Guelke and R Shell, "An Early Colonial Landed Gentry: land and wealth in the Cape Colony 1682-1731", *Journal of Historical Geography*, 9, 3 (1983), pp 207 ff; Morgan, *American Slavery*, pp 119-20, 164-70, 304.
- 12 Herbert Moller, "Sex Composition and Correlated Culture Patterns of Colonial America", *William and Mary Quarterly*, Second Series 2 (1945), pp 113-53.
- 13 This was the case in the American South. See Anne Firor Scott, *Southern Lady. From Pedestal to Politics* (Chicago, 1970), pp 46 ff.
- 14 Shell, "Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope", pp 102-20.
- 15 D R C Kaapstad Notule GI 1/1 and 2 "Ledematen"; Stephen R Grossbart, "Seeking the Divine Favor: conversion and church admission in eastern Connecticut, 1711-1832", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series 46 (1989), pp 696-740.
- 16 Stanley M Elkins, *Slavery: a problem in American institutional and intellectual life* (Chicago, 1963), p 55.

- 17 December 1662, Warren M Billings, *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: a documentary history of Virginia, 1606-1689* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1975), p 172.
- 18 Edgar T Thompson, "Virginia", in Edgar T Thompson (ed), *Race: individual and collective behavior* (New York, 1958), p 262.
- 19 I have made a distinction between reproductive, sexual and gender exploitation, where reproductive exploitation means that the offspring or nurturing services (such as wet-nursing) are the target of exploitation: sexual exploitation means the exploitation of the body, while gender exploitation is the exploitation of the status of women. All could exist in a single act of exploitation or separately.
- 20 This law is not found in the incomplete *Kaapse Plakkaatboeken*, but nevertheless it did have a profound influence at the Cape: see H C Vos's correspondence and "Extracts from the Statutes of India", especially article 8 in G M Theal (ed), *Records of the Cape Colony (RCC)* 9, pp 130-34; and see also CAD SO (20 January 1766), 17/1, no pagination.
- 21 Robert Shell (ed), "Essays on Slaves", *Kronos* 9 (1984), p 52; Anonymous, *Gleanings in Africa: exhibiting a faithful and correct view of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope* (London, 1806; reprint NY, 1969), p 64.
- 22 O F Mentzel, *A Complete and Authentic Geographical and Topographical Description of the ... Cape of Good Hope* (Cape Town, 1921, 1925, 1944), 2, p 30.
- 23 Robert Percival, *An Account of the Cape of Good Hope* (New York, 1969, reprint of 1804 edition), p 291; and R Shell (ed), Hudson, "Slaves", p 51.
- 24 Elkins, *Slavery*, p 55.
- 25 Shell (ed), Hudson, "Slaves":, pp 68-69.
- 26 "Papers relating to the Manumission of Steyntje and her children, with an appendix", *South African Bound Pamphlets* (Cape Town, 1827).
- 27 Shell (ed), Hudson, "Slaves", pp 51-52.
- 28 Percival, *An Account of the Cape*, pp 285 and 291.
- 29 Shell (ed), Hudson, "Slaves", pp 54-55.
- 30 Daniel Denyson, "Statement of the Laws of the Cape of Good Hope regarding Slaves" (16 March 1813), in Theal, *RCC*, 9, pp 146-61.
- 31 W Bird, *State of the Cape* (Cape Town, 1966. Facsimile reprint of 1823 edition: London, 1823), pp 73-74. See also Percival, *An Account of the Cape*, pp 285-86.
- 32 Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup Relations", pp 140-41.
- 33 A M van der Woude, in Peter Laslett (ed), *Household and Family in Past Time* (Cambridge, 1972), pp 309 and 311. For the Cape, see AR: VOC 4017, "Lijst der vrije luijden en haeren ommeslag ..." (14 February 1682): 114; VOC 4018, "Generale rolle der vrije luijden en haeren verdere ommeslag" (31 January 1683): 210.
- 34 The tiny free black community are included in theses aggregate totals but their inclusion does not affect this statement; their numbers were all relatively small; their growth rate, too, was small.

- 35 See appendix in Shell, "Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope", 2, pp 313 ff; Leonard Guelke, "The Anatomy of a Colonial Settler Population: Cape Colony, 1657-1750", mimeo, 1986, Table 10.
- 36 Peter Kolbe, *The Present State of the Cape of Good Hope* (London, 1968; reprint of 1731 edition), 2 volumes, 2, p 340 (emphasis and capitalization in original).
- 37 Kolbe, *State of the Cape*, 2, pp 338-39.
- 38 Robert Shell (ed), "Samuel Hudson on Marriages and Other Customs at the Cape", *Kronos* 15 (1989), pp 49-50; John Hannal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective" in D V Glass and D E C Eversly (eds), *Population and History: Essays in Historical Demography* (London, 1965), p 102.
- 39 In America the figures were 22.3 years in second generation, 24.5 years in third generation: see Philip Greven, *Four Generations ... in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts* (Ithaca, 1970), pp 200-01 and 271. Anthony Flew (ed), Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (Pelican Classics, 1970), pp 106 ff.
- 40 T H Hollingsworth, *Historical Demography* (Ithaca, 1969), pp 102 ff.
- 41 The proportion of the population who enter into marriage.
- 42 C C de Villiers and C Pama, *Geslagsregisters van die ou Kaapse Families* (Cape Town, 1981), *passim*..
- 43 John Hajnal, "European Marriage Patterns in Perspective" in Glass and Eversly (eds), *Population in History* , pp 101-43.
- 44 Peter Laslett (ed), *Household and Family in Past Time*, pp 125-28, 170-71, 191-203 (England); pp 264, 331-33 (France); and 551-60 (Colonial America).
- 45 M P de Chavonnes and G W van Imhoff, *The Reports of Chavonnes and his Council* (Cape Town, 1918), pp 121, 125. See also the "Opinions on Immigration" in 1750, pp 149 ff.
- 46 de Villiers and Pama, *Geslagregisters van die ou Kaapse Families* , *passim*.. For the hierarchical organization of the colony, see Mentzel, *A Complete Description*, 2, pp 75-92; 2, pp 115-123. An annotated hierarchy of the entire colony is found in Leonard Guelke, Robert Shell and Anthony Whyte (compilers), "The de la Fontaine Report", New Haven, Opgaaf Project, 1990; the original document is in Holland, AR: Rademacher Collection, Letters of Jan de la Fontaine (30 January 1732), and Appendices.
- 47 Since slaves were a risky investment, slave-sellers - with some few exceptions - insisted on cash. Since there was little available currency at the Cape and no banks, a complex, family-based credit system materialized in the colony. This system can be reconstructed from the "Sureties" and "IOUs (Obligatien)", interleaved with the property transfers in Cape Town, DO: *Transporten en Schepenkenis* (Vols 1-25).
- 48 Pama, *Geslagsregisters*, esp s.v. "Retief", "De Villiers", "Bosman", "Mostert", and so on.
- 49 R Shell (ed), Samuel Hudson on Marriages and other Customs at the Cape, *Kronos* 15 (1989), pp 49-50.

- 50 A M van der Woude, in Laslett (ed), *Household and Family in Past Time*, pp 309 and 311. For the Cape, see AR: VOC 4017, "Lijst der vrije luijden en haeren ommeslag ..." (14 February 1682); VOC 4018, "Generale rolle der vrije luijden en haeren verdere ommeslag" (31 January 1683): 210.
- 51 See R Shell, 'An Extension of the Family: the Overseer' in "Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope" (Yale PhD, 1986), pp 276-87.
- 52 See earlier graph on sex ratios.
- 53 O F Mentzel, *Life at the Cape in the Mid-Eighteenth Century ...* (Cape Town, 1920), p 40; Robert Shell (ed), "Katie Jacobs: an early oral history", *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library* (forthcoming), unedited original version in *APO Newsletter* ("Christmas Number" 1910), pp 8-9.
- 54 C Graham Botha, *Social Life in the Cape Colony with Social Customs in South Africa in the Eighteenth Century* (Cape Town, 1973), p 83.
- 55 Mentzel, *A Complete Description*, 2, p 108; Botha, *Social Life and Customs*, pp 40 and 83.
- 56 *Resolutions* (16 June 1692), 3, p 256.
- 57 Theal, *History of South Africa* (London, 1964), 3, p 477.
- 58 Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: an interpretation of Dutch culture in the golden age* (Berkeley, 1988), pp 539-40; Blussé, *Strange Company*, pp 187 (birth intervals) and 191 (for wet nurse). Only Thunberg, among all the sources, disputed the Cape practice of slave wet-nursing, but Sparrman, travelling at the same period, noted in clear contrast that the colonists preferred "Malays as [wet]nurses". See C P Thunberg, *Travels in Europe, Africa and Asia made between the years 1770 and 1779* (Cape Town, 1986), p 33, but see editor's note 52; Anders Sparrman, *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope ... Chiefly into the Country of the Hottentots and Caffres ...* (Cape Town, 1975), 1, p 218.
- 59 Kolbe, *State of the Cape*, 2, pp 340-41 (Kolbe's italics).
- 60 For a discussion of this point, see Alan F Guttmacher, *Pregnancy and Birth* (New York, 1962). I am grateful to Helen Armstrong for many further details on this subject.
- 61 Christopher Tietze, "Reproduction Span and Rate of Reproduction Among Hutterite Women", *Fertility and Sterility* 8 (January-February 1957), pp 89-97.
- 62 The multiple level sort was done with the aid of a spreadsheet and much volatile memory: Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup Relations", Table 4.4, p 132.
- 63 VOC 4081 (2, 3, 4 May 1719), folios 813 ff.
- 64 A Gordon Brown (ed), James Ewart, *James Ewart's Journal, covering his stay at the Cape of Good Hope, 1811-1814* (Cape Town, 1970), p 26.
- 65 Guelke, "Anatomy", Table 5.
- 66 Mentzel, *A Complete Description*, 2, pp 108-09.
- 67 R Elphick and R Shell, "Intergroup Relations", in R Elphick and H Giliomee, *The Shaping of South African Society* (Middletown, 1989), p 205, Figure 4.1.

- 68 CAD: C 502 Letters despatched, Cape to Patria (18 April 1687), pp 336-37; Leibbrandt, *Requesten*, 3 (20 March 1756), p 1080; *ibid.* (20 January 1778), p 1112.
- 69 Victor de Kock, *Those in Bondage: an account of the life of the slave at the Cape in the days of the Dutch East India Company* (London, 1950), p 61; Leibbrandt, *Requesten*, 1 (No 35 of 1771), p 265.
- 70 For numerous examples, see Leibbrandt's *Requesten*, 1713-1806.
- 71 (Emphasis added) CAD: Leibbrandt (Manuscript) LM 16, p 1054 (No 187 of 1789).
- 72 Spanish: *enameraldos*, a young lover.
- 73 Shell (ed), "Samuel Hudson on Marriages", *Kronos* 15 (1989), p 52 and note 19.
- 74 As quoted in Howard Philip, "Cape Town in 1829", *Studies in the History of Cape Town* 3 (1984), p 7.
- 75 *RCC*, "Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry to Earl Bathurst upon the Finances" (Cape of Good Hope, 6 September 1826), 27, p 444; and for the wet-nurses, cf *ibid.*, 27, p 422.
- 76 (Katie Jacobs), "The Life of Katie Jacobs, an Ex-Slave" in *APO Newsletter* (Christmas Number), 1910, pp 8-9.
- 77 CAD SO "Compensation Lists" 17/1 (N = 1,506 slaves).
- 78 Only a minute analysis of the wills of the Cape Colonists will yield more data which might more fully support the existence of wet-nurses and nanny in the Cape slave family.
- 79 "*Minnemoeder*", shortened to "*Minnemoer*" and sometimes to "*Minna*", has an entirely Dutch etymology. Cf Verdam, *Handwoordenboek*, s.v. "*minne*" as "*Zoogmoeder*", p 360, while *Aia*, sometimes "*Aiya*", *pace* Botha, was Malay.
- 80 See the breakdown of occupations in the accompanying pie diagram.
- 81 For example: "An emancipated female slave infected with the venereal disease to be cared for in the slave lodge and corporally punished when released, but a second time taken in[to the] hospital, be confined or punished more severely." CAD SO 17/1 (23 December 1803), no pagination.
- 82 De Kock, *Those in Bondage*, pp 184 and 185.
- 83 K Jeffreys and S D Naude *et al.* (comp.), *Kaapse Plakkaatboek* (Parow: Cape Times, 1950) (15 March 1740), 2, p 171; and cf *ibid.* (24 April 1753), 2, p 246.
- 84 Shell (ed), "Hudson on Marriages and Other Customs at the Cape", p 53 and note 23.
- 85 *RCC*, 14, p 484.
- 86 *RCC*, "Letter of R B Fisher to William Wilberforce" (13 September 1813), 11, pp 176-83; "Letter from Bathurst to Lord Charles Somerset (instigating an enquiry into infanticide at the Cape)" (24 September 1816), 11, pp 188, 344-49; and *RCC*, 16, p 65, "Wilmot Horton to Lord Charles Somerset - the trial of a female slave, Hester, for the murder of her three children in 1819"; 16, "Somerset to R Wilmot", 16 (20 October 1823), pp 379-81.

- 87 Eugene D Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (New York, 1976), p 497.
- 88 Gilberto Freyre, *The Masters and the Slaves: a study in the development of Brazilian Civilization* (New York, 1971), pp 278-79.
- 89 *Ibid.*, p 279.
- 90 C R Boxer, *The Golden Age of Brazil, 1695-1750* (Berkeley, 1962), p 16.
- 91 Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *The Unnatural History of the Nanny* (New York, 1973), p 56 (published in England under *The Rise and Fall of the English Nanny*).
- 92 (Emphasis added), Mentzel, *A Complete Description*, 2, pp 109-10.
- 93 Lady Duff-Gordon, *Letters from the Cape* (London, 1927), p 112.
- 94 Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup Relations", p 131.
- 95 AR: VOC 4069, Processtukken, "Recollement van Matschinge" (2 September 1712), folio 538 and verso.
- 96 H C V Leibbrandt, *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope, Journal, 1699-1732* (Cape Town, 1896), pp 260-61.
- 97 Pama, *Geslagsregisters*, 1, p 367.
- 98 H C V Leibbrandt, *Letters Despatched. Précis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope* (3 September 1714), (Cape Town, 1900), pp 260-61.
- 99 C Spoelstra, *Bouwstoffen voor de Geschiedenis der Neder Duitsch Gereformeerde Kerken in Zuid-Afrika* (Amsterdam, 1906), (17 September 1716), 2, p 431.
- 100 *Ibid.* (6 December 1716), 2, p 431.
- 101 Mentzel, *A Complete Description*, 3, p 104.
- 102 *Ibid.*
- 103 Thunberg, *Travels* ..., pp 50-51 and 33 notes, but one asks what would have happened to the infant: Would the mother have had it baptized or have had it aborted? See also Nigel Worden, *Slavery in Dutch South Africa* (Cambridge, 1985), pp 148-49.
- 104 Sparrman, *Travels*, 1, p 94.
- 105 At first the company slaves were listed together with the settlers, but after 1693 listed separately. See Cape Town: DRCA Kaap Notule, 1665-1695, Doop Register, GR1 Vol 1/1-5.
- 106 For the merits of these sources, see Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup Relations", pp 129 ff.
- 107 Ambrose Cowley, *Voyage Round the Globe* ..., as quoted in R Raven-Hart (ed), *Cape Good Hope* (Cape Town, 1971), 2, p 310.
- 108 Mentzel, *A Complete Description*, 2, p 124. See also Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup Relations", p 127.

- 109 (“Kammene Kas, Kammene Kunte” = If you have no money, I have no ...) Mentzel, *A Complete Description*, 3, p 99.
- 110 C G Botha, “Early Cape Matrimonial Law”, in *Collected Works* (Cape Town, 1962), 2, p 57.
- 111 (Moeder naact”) in *Kaapse Plakkaatboek* (26 November 1681), 1, pp 179-80.
- 112 (Emphasis added) Charles Lockyer, *An Account of the Trade in India* (London, 1711), p 297.
- 113 Johan Daniel Buttner, *Accounts of the Cape ... 1716-1721* (Cape Town, 1970), p 66.
- 114 Shell, “Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope”, p 134.
- 115 Mentzel, *A Complete Description*, 2, p 125.
- 116 C336 (31 August 1714), p 471, No 388: her son was a schoolmaster, *ibid.*, No 245; another was a pupil, *ibid.*, No 267. Her manumission request has not been found, but she is listed as the wife of Frisnet in RA KA 4060 (19 April 1720), Opgaaf, Entry 219 Cape District. See also Leibbrandt’s *Requesten*, 4, p 1262 (No 45 of 1727) for the fate of another of her sons.
- 117 Leibbrandt, *Requesten*, 2 (No 62 of 1789), and *ibid.* (No 55 of 1759), p 872.
- 118 *Kaapse Plakkaatboek* (Publicatie: Article 8 B, 1804), 6, p 218; cf *ibid.*, Article 23, p 223.
- 119 Robert Semple, *Walks and Sketches at the Cape of Good Hope, 1805*, ed Frank Barlow (Cape Town, 1968), p 39.
- 120 R Shell, “Rites and Rebellion”, *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, 5 (1984), p 28.
- 121 Bird, *State of the Cape*, p 74.
- 122 William Wright, *Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope* (New York, 1969, reprint of 1831 edition), pp 14 and 106.
- 123 A Hulshof, “Journaal”, pp 206-07.
- 124 DO: Transporten en Schepenkenis (31 December 1689), 18/90, pp 292-93.
- 125 Hulshof, “Journaal”, p 207.
- 126 Hans Heese has painstakingly documented all such cases: see *Groep sonder Grense* (Bellville, 1984), passim, especially Appendix A, pp 41-75.
- 127 Hulshof, “Journaal”, p 7.
- 128 *Ibid.*, pp 189-223. F C Dominicus, in his classic work on domestic life of South Africa in the eighteenth century, claims that it was forbidden for a European to marry “a pure breed”: *Het Huiselik en Maatschappelik Leven van de Zuid Afrikaner in der Eerste Helft der 18de Eeuw* (S-Gravenhage, 1919), p 79, but the present author has been unable to find the original source.

- 129 Hulshof, "Journaal", 1-125; cf *Kaapse Plakkaatboek* (30 November 1678), 1, pp 151-52. Since all Company "half-breeds" were baptized, an assumption has been made that references to "heathen slave-women" are equivalent to references to "full-breed".
- 130 Gary B Mills, "Miscegenation and the Free Negro in Antebellum 'Anglo' Alabama: a reexamination of Southern race relations", *Journal of American History* 68 No 1 (June 1981), pp 16-34.
- 131 The original documents do not use the word "mulatto", but use the word "half-breed" (*halfslag*), which has an offensive tone.
- 132 Marguerite de Savoye married Christoffel Snyman and Maria Roos married David Hoon in 1794. Hoon's father was a slave from Madagascar, and his mother, Rachel of the Cape, was the daughter of Indian parents. The only Conservative Party member on then "all white" President's Council in 1988 is a fifth generation descendant of this couple. Private Communication, Hans Heese/Robert Shell (5 December 1988).
- 133 Information from Ralph Austen's taped interview with Andre Brink, August 1991.
- 134 Herbert Moller, "Sex Compositions and Correlated Culture Patterns of Colonial America", *William and Mary Quarterly*, Second Series 2 (1945), p 135.
- 135 The Cape crime records of this period cover over 1000 metres of shelf space in the Rijksarchief; obviously not all could be consulted. See some published examples in Moodie, *The Record*, pp 380-85, especially Cupido of Bengal who had a "criminal conversation" with his master's daughter (3 February 1681), p 384, and also Anna Böeseken's *Uit die Raad van Justisie* (Pretoria, 1986), *passim*.
- 136 Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup Relations", p 131.
- 137 (*Ein dat door een swarte lijveigen aan een vrije dogter van Europeansche geslag*) in AR: VOC 4053 "Eijsch en Conclusie" (4 June 1705), folio 580. It must be noted that these were the words of the sentence of the court. The prosecutor used a very different construction in his phrasing, viz: "that this [crime] was perpetrated [by a slave and heathen] on a girl of European, and Christian descent [sic] ..." ("Het welke [als bij een slaaf en onchristen] aan een dogter van Europeesche en Christene geslagte [sic] gepleegd ...") Race and religion were clearly close analogues in the minds of the court officials.
- 138 Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup Relations", Table 4.4, p 132.
- 139 W Blommaert, "Het invoeren van de slavernij aan de Kaap", *Archives Year Book* 1, 1 (1938), p 7.
- 140 Ansiela's record illustrates on an anecdotal basis that slave women, freed of wet-nursing duties, could have as many children as settler women: cf Pama, *Geslagregisters*, 1, p 24.
- 141 i.e. "Heelslag".
- 142 Data for marriages from Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup Relations", pp 129-30; data of the slave population from the transfers.
- 143 Harry Hoetink, *Slavery and Race Relations in the Americas: comparative notes on their nature and nexus* (New York, 1973), pp 205-10.
- 144 Georges Bataille, *Eroticism* (San Francisco, 1986, reprint of 1962 edition).

- 145 Sparrman, *Travels*, 1, p 72.
- 146 Elphick and Shell, "Intergroup Relations", p 218. Figures are for 1760.
- 147 *Ibid.*, p 215.
- 148 CAD: (12 November 1765), SO 17/1, no pagination.
- 149 (Emphasis in original) A M Lewin Robinson (ed), *The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas* (Cape Town, 1973), p 174.
- 150 H F Heese, *Groep Sonder Grense* , pp 41-75.
- 151 I have calculated the number of slaves imported into the colony from a reiterative formula applied to the annual *opgaafs* from 1658 to 1808, making algebraic assumptions about fertility, mortality and runaways. I hope to publish this rather technical work somewhere, but at this time can find no home for it. I would be glad to provide the details to anyone interested.
- 152 Sparrman, *Travels*, p 74; Bird, *State of the Cape in 1822*, p 348.
- 153 This is attributed to the earlier physical maturity of the slave girls: see Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross* (Boston, 1974), 1, p 77.
- 154 Unfortunately, it is not possible to derive the same graph from the nineteenth-century date, since women were nearly always sold with their offspring in a joint sale and at a single price.
- 155 Shell, "Slavery at the Cape of Good Hope", pp 79-81.
- 156 Mentzel, *A Complete Description*, 2, p 110.
- 157 Sparrman, *Travels*, 2, pp 343-44.
- 158 PRO (Kew) CO 53/57 (14 October 1833), no pagination.
- 159 Anonymous, *Gleanings in Africa: exhibiting a faithful and correct view of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope* (London, 1806; Negro Universities press reprint 1969), pp 257-58. See also Semple, *Walks and Sketches*, pp 37-38.
- 160 Shell (ed) "Samuel Hudson on Marriages", *Kronos* 15 (1989), p 56.
- 161 CAD Verbatim Copies Series, VC 17, Lt-Col Robert Wilson, "Description of the Cape Colony", p 15.
- 162 Mentzel, *Description*, 2, p 125.
- 163 (Katie Jacobs) "The Life of Katie Jacobs, an Ex-Slave", pp 8-9.