

# ‘Brand’s City’:

## Dutch Space and Identity in Cape Town, 1830-1850

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In 1834, travelling to the Cape for the first time, a young Scottish officer noted the following in his diary. ‘The inhabitants of Cape Town’ he wrote,

may be divided into six classes: I. The civil and military functionaries ... II. Lawyers, medical practitioners, merchants ... and all other white inhabitants above the rank of servants. III. European and Cape-Dutch artificers and labourers, who compose *a very doubtful class* between the other white inhabitants and the freed blacks and Malays ... IV. The free Malays, who in point of intellect are above the free blacks and slaves. V. The Hottentots ... And – VI. The Slaves, - that numerous and unhappy class, whose mental and moral degradation is a reproach to their Christian masters. *A more disjointed state of society, can hardly exist anywhere.*<sup>1</sup>

So wrote Lieutenant James Moodie. Cape Town was thus a vast melting pot of culture in which all races were thrown together to create a very doubtful state of affairs.<sup>2</sup> Of course Moodie, ever the pious Scot, singles out the harshest criticism for the slave owning and un-Enlightened Cape Dutch: ‘the despotic government of the colony has rendered them mean, deceitful, and cowardly; and the possession of slaves has made them cruel and tyrannical to their dependants.’<sup>3</sup> In fact the vast bulk of his discussion on Cape Town is devoted to complaints about the avaricious Cape Dutch. This was a time of great upheaval in the Cape colony, as two major events in particular demonstrate: one was the ending of slavery in 1838, and the other was increased migration of British nationals to the Cape. It is in this context that we find the emergence of a Cape Dutch intellectual movement.

1 JWD Moodie, *Ten Years in South Africa: including a Particular description of the Wild Sports of that Country*, Volume 1, (London: Richard Bentley, 1835), 31-32. Emphasis added.

2 For examples of works which highlight the cosmopolitan nature of early Cape Town see: Nigel Worden, ‘VOC Cape Town as an Indian Ocean Port,’ in *Cross Currents and Community Networks: the history of the Indian Ocean world*, eds. Himanshu Ray and Edward Alpers, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 142-162. Kerry Ward, ‘“Tavern of the seas?”: The Cape of Good Hope as an oceanic crossroads during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,’ in *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral cultures, and transoceanic exchanges*, eds. Jerry H Bentley, Renate Bridenthal and Kaearen Wigen, (Honolulu: Honolulu University Press, 2007), 137-152.

3 JWD Moodie, *Ten Years in South Africa*, 34.

The Cape Dutch movement was interested in promoting Dutch culture at the Cape, but it was not, as Robert Ross notes, an Afrikaner nationalist movement because it took its cultural cues from the Netherlands, not from South Africa.<sup>4</sup> This was a period which saw huge growth in international print culture. However if, as Christopher Holdridge describes, ‘Anglophone newspapers ... were powerful tools for coalescing community of interest among self-identified Britons,’<sup>5</sup> what exactly were Dutch newspapers? Publications like *De Zuid Afrikaan*, under the editorship of the opinionated Christoffel Brand, quickly found their purpose in providing the outlet for the concerns of a cultural group which was fast becoming a minority. It is my intention to survey the attitude of *De Zuid Afrikaan* in relation to the urban Dutch identity of Cape Town. While urban historians have far from neglected Cape Town, there has as yet been no extensive survey of urban Cape Dutch life under British occupation.<sup>6</sup> My argument here is that like an organism in the wild, Cape Dutch culture adapted to survive a changing environment; the result of which was a strange hybrid of both British and Dutch parentage. This was not a conscious process, nor was it always done willingly, but British culture provided the Dutch with something tangible to react against.<sup>7</sup> For this reason it seems that much of the discourse of the paper is a conservative reply rather than a complete ideological blueprint.

The influence of human geography at the Cape has not gone unnoticed, and has indeed produced some innovative works of urban history, such as Kirsten McKenzie’s study of the colonial public sphere and Nigel Worden on VOC Cape Town.<sup>8</sup> Before going any further it might be useful to examine the concepts of *space* and *place*. Put simply, place is space invested with meaning.<sup>9</sup> Andrew Bank and Gary Minkley, drawing heavily on the work of Henri Lefebvre, have argued that space can be broken down into the following categories: ‘perceived space,’ which is the material, and unconscious ‘conceived space,’ which deals with planning and control over a given territory and finally ‘lived space’ which is how people themselves give meaning to an area.<sup>10</sup> Within this

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4 Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape colony 1750-1870: A Tragedy of Manners*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 47-49.

5 Christopher Holdridge, ‘Circulating the African Journal: The Colonial Press and Trans-Imperial Britishness in the Mid Nineteenth Century,’ *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 62, No. 3, (2010), 488.

6 Andrew Bank and Gary Minkley ‘Editorial: Genealogies of Space and Identity in Cape Town,’ *Kronos*, Vol. 25, (1998/99), 16. For an overview of South African urban history see: Bill Freund, ‘Urban History in South Africa,’ *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 1, (2005), 19-31. Vivian Bickford-Smith, ‘Urban History in the New South Africa: continuity and innovation since the end of apartheid,’ *Urban History*, Vol. 32, No. 2, (2008), 287-315. For a general survey of colonial Cape historiography, see: Nigel Worden, ‘New approaches to VOC History in South Africa,’ *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 59, (2007), 3-18.

7 Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 43.

8 Nigel Worden, ‘Space and Identity in VOC Cape Town,’ *Kronos*, Vol. 35, (1998/99), 72-87. Kirsten McKenzie, ‘Franklins of the Cape: *The South African Commercial Advertiser* and the Creation of a Colonial Public Sphere, 1824-1854,’ *Kronos*, Vol. 35, (1998/99), 88-102. Kirsten McKenzie, ‘Dogs and the Public Sphere: The ordering of social space in early nineteenth century Cape Town,’ *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 1, (2003), 235-251. Kirsten McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town, 1820-1850*, (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2004). Bank and Minkley ‘Editorial,’ 4-16.

9 Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1-12.

10 Bank and Minkley, ‘Editorial’ 5-6. See also: Yi-Fu Tuan, ‘Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective,’ in *Human Geography: An Essential Anthology*, eds. John Agnew, David N Livingstone, and Alisdair Rogers, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 444-457.

framework I intend to examine the following: ideas of leisure, concepts of progress, municipal institutions and finally slavery to see how the Cape Dutch contested meaning in colonial Cape Town. In this sense, it was a unique process of negotiation that helped to create Cape Dutch identity.

### Concepts of Leisure

An enlightened publication such as *De Zuid Afrikaan* devoted surprisingly little space to activities of leisure, though this did not mean that such topics were completely non-existent. Perhaps this explains why William Layton Sammons, the editor of *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, described the paper as a dull ‘chronicler of small beer and sheep’s tail fat.’<sup>11</sup> Part of the answer lies in the fact that the Cape Dutch were not particularly socially inclined. As Alan Hattlesley suggests, such activities that did take place were much more centred on the home, and more specifically the *stoep*, which might be thought of as an early but open and unclosed veranda.<sup>12</sup> To the British, the sight of people lounging in what appeared to be the middle of the street was the epitome of lunacy. In an age when the street was intimately connected with danger and vice, the pre-modern and continental understanding of an open public sphere was anathema to the Anglicanised policy of enclosing safety within the home.<sup>13</sup> Perhaps an activity that was regarded as so natural, especially in the warm summer afternoons was taken for granted by the editors of *De Zuid Afrikaan*.

Of course the Cape Dutch also managed to convert their fair share of British settlers to their conception of leisure, though this did not necessarily entail lounging in the open *stoep*. As Worden, Bickford-Smith and van Heyningen have noted, the Cape Dutch ‘men and women made separate visits in the morning, spent the afternoon sleeping, and the evening house-calling or gathering socially on *stoeps*; to these were added dance parties, which became fashionable from the late 1770s.’<sup>14</sup> There were practical reasons for this, and the British soon learned that it made little sense to drink excessively, and followed Dutch example of avoiding the heat of the day at all costs.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the *lived space* of the *stoep* still fitted the pre-modern pattern of openness with no clear demarcation between the home and the street.

When the Dutch did venture out from the comfort of their own homes, a favourite destination was the theatre, and *De Zuid Afrikaan* is littered with numerous notices and reports on theatrical matters. The theatre was a favourable option because it provided a medium through which to disseminate Dutch culture and educate the community at large. In this sense the productions favoured by the residents of Cape Town were not particularly different from the broad high culture tradition sweeping the Western world. ‘An Old Amateur’ for example described the following scene:

By particular request the Company on Friday Evening, once more performed ‘*Clemence and Waldemar*,’ followed by after-pieces ‘*Het Losse Schot*’ and ‘*De Gevarlyke Burman*.’

11 *Sam Sly’s African Journal*, 7 March 1844, cited in Holdridge, ‘Circulating the African Journal,’ 502.

12 Alan F. Hattlesley, *An Illustrated Social History of South Africa*, (Cape Town: AA Balkema, 1973), 76.

13 Kirsten McKenzie, ‘Gender and Honour in Middle Class Cape Town: The Making of Colonial Identities 1828-1850,’ (PhD diss., Oxford University, 1997), 56-57.

14 Nigel Worden, Elizabeth van Heyningen and Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town: The Making of a City* (Cape Town: David Phillip, 1999), 141.

15 *Ibid.*, 142-143.

Mention should be particularly made of the part of *Urbaan*, which was so masterly performed by a boy of but five years old. *Proceed in this manner young Gentlemen, for it is better for you to employ your leisure hours, in the performance of useful and moral Dramatic pieces, than in idle amusement.*<sup>16</sup>

Note the ending in particular which links culture to education, an idea that would certainly have found favour with the readers of the *South African Commercial Advertiser*. Brand himself was very much a product of the Enlightenment and not dissimilarly to Fairbairn saw it as his duty not only to inform his readers, but to educate them as well. Such institutions were not simply elitist in their subject choices, but were spatially exclusive as well. As Vivian Bickford-Smith argues, the respectable theatre was a white-only affair, and such institutions sought to win favour with their audience by promoting a sense of cultural difference, which came mostly in the form of negative stereotyping.<sup>17</sup>

However, the changes that took place in the world of theatre were happening elsewhere in the colonies as well. Sydney and Melbourne for example had their fair share of theatres which by the 1840s were making the transition from communal recreation places, traditionally open to all and offering all services from alcohol to prostitution, to more enclosed and educational affairs. Racial stereotypes were still popular, but were now situated alongside more serious productions.<sup>18</sup> Of course it was in Brand's interest to present a more moral Cape Town than might have otherwise been the case, for in the eyes of Colonial Office mandarins, the colony still had to prove itself worthy of responsible government. In short, this meant showing an interest in moral reform and distancing itself from the taint of slavery. Unsurprisingly Brand and his associates had little interest in the culture of the masses, who were generally classed in unfavourable racial terms due to the frequent mixing between white and non-white cultures. Thus while the urban burgher may have composed poetry or visited a respectable production the worker had to be content with the canteen, which provided a rare opportunity to escape the overcrowded home and was an (increasingly rare) element of pre-industrial life as it was under the VOC.<sup>19</sup>

The theatre was not the form of leisure open to the more respectable of the Cape Dutch. Indeed, for the more adventurous, there was the spectacle of the 'talian Circus.<sup>20</sup> No doubt the introduction of the word 'Italian' was to suggest something both exotic and respectable, and it would certainly have been a grand affair for the entire city. However in contrast to the rest of the paper, the circus in this period would have been a much more inclusive affair which perhaps could be best described as middlebrow. First and Second class seating allowed the more respectable to view the production

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16 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 8 August 1843. Emphasis added.

17 Vivian Bickford Smith, 'Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town, British Cape Colony, 1838-1910,' *Kronos*, Vol. 35, (1998/99), 114-115. See also McKenzie, 'Gender and Honour in Middle Class Cape Town,' 91-93.

18 Richard Waterhouse, *Private Pleasures, Public Leisure: A history of Australian popular culture since 1788*, (South Melbourne: Longman, 1995), 42-47.

19 Bickford-Smith, 'Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town,' 117-119. Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town*, 147-148. For information on pre-modern culture in Cape Town under the VOC see Worden, 'Demanding Satisfaction,' 32-47. Nigel Worden, 'Artisan conflicts in a colonial context,' *Journal of Labour History*, Vol. 46, No. 2, (May 2005), 155-184. Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 1-39.

20 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 29 November 1847.

in relative safety, free from uncouth masses. The fact that this production was brought funded by a Dutch officer would also have lent a level of respectability to the enterprise.

While there was also the Freemason lodges (for the Dutch had few of their own clubs in contrast to the British), it was really the turf which produced the greatest amount of excitement in *De Zuid Afrikaan*.<sup>21</sup> However, despite the obvious importance of racing in Cape Town during this period, it has not been covered in any detail by a number of works. Alan Hattlesley neglects any coverage of racing in his discussion of urban leisure during this period, while Vivian Bickford-Smith scarcely gives more than a few paragraphs in his study of leisure in Cape Town.<sup>22</sup> In racing, the Dutch were more than happy to cooperate with the British (which were referred to as 'our friends in India') in establishing an elite recreation, though this did not stop complaints about the lack of competition in the events.<sup>23</sup> One citizen lamented the few subscribers among the elite, given the popularity of such events.<sup>24</sup> Despite a willingness to be seen by the lower orders, there was a level of ambivalence about being associated with their behaviour, because given their size, such events like the circus managed to attract people from all over the colony.

Certainly this ambivalence towards the masses was something that pervaded Brand and indeed Fairbairn's conception of leisure and did not escape the attention of the British civil servant and satirist Charles D'Oyly.<sup>25</sup> The black and white sketch shows the middle classes, (both Dutch and British) strolling leisurely through the company gardens in the heart of the city. The presence of the gate suggests a purpose of keeping others out, a fact which testifies to the relative absence of slaves and free blacks within the picture, a *conceived space*. The twisted trees which line the crowded path suggest an almost claustrophobic atmosphere. The figures that seem to be parading only for the benefit of each other should be read within the broader context of 'Anglicanization,' through which the Dutch are encouraged to leave the morally suspect space of the *stoep*, in favour of a much more exclusive venue. Thus while Boniface, de Lima and others frequently wrote plays for (and occasionally about) each other they were preaching only to the converted, and in this sense the sketch highlights the uneasy position that the Cape Dutch elites found themselves in; the transition between the pre-modern, and open culture of the *stoep* versus the spatially exclusive high culture of the British.<sup>26</sup>

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21 Brand himself was appointed National Grand Master by the Prince of the Netherlands in 1843. Despite being increasingly popular in Britain, there was a level of tension between British and Dutch lodges. *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 20 December 1843. Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town*, 145. On racing see *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 7 May 1830 and 26 September 1834. Occasionally the paper borrowed from other local publications for coverage of the event, though certainly not the *South African Commercial Advertiser*; more likely would be, (for Cape Town at least) *Sam Sly's African Journal*, see *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 2 May 1843.

22 Hattlesley, *An Illustrated Social History of South Africa*, 76-77. Bickford-Smith, 'Leisure and Social Identity in Cape Town,' 108-109. See also Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town*, 140-141.

23 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 7 May 1830.

24 *Ibid.*

25 See Charles D'Oyly, in Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town*, 146.

26 McKenzie, 'Gender and Honour in Middle Class Cape Town,' 91-93.

## Conceptions of Progress

Despite its somewhat eclectic tastes, *De Zuid Afrikaan* was a firm believer in progress. At least its form of progress, which generally meant having as little to do with the liberal humanitarianism of Fairbairn and his colleagues as possible and, in contrast, espousing the benefits of a Dutch derived culture. ‘We have been favoured with a sight of the *Sydney Gazette*... containing some animadversions on the South African College,’ wrote an excited Charles Boniface (editor before Brand took over officially later on).<sup>27</sup> Boniface helpfully attached the offending column, which concluded with the following remarks:

The colonial public of New South Wales support three newspapers... the whole population of the Cape Colony can only maintain one, (containing altogether two weekly sheets); and as the other one half of the only paper at the Cape of Good Hope is merely a translation of the other half, it follows from this acknowledged fact, that the colony of New South Wales requires an amount of publication in the shape of advertisements and general intelligence, six times greater than the amount required by the Anglo-Dutch colony of South Africa. Surely the preponderance in the point of intellect and enterprise, and the desire for education, is prodigiously in favour of the inhabitants of Australia.<sup>28</sup>

The reply from Boniface was equally sharp, but he chose instead to stress the unity between British and Dutch cultures: ‘it is particularly pleasing to observe that the influential members of all four communions at Cape Town... cooperate in the most cordial manner.’<sup>29</sup> Interestingly for such an explosive character, he chose to overlook the snide comment linking *De Zuid Afrikaan* to the *South African Commercial Advertiser*, suggesting that the Dutch had no worthy news.

Like their British counterparts the Cape Dutch took pride in their educational institutions, which they felt were necessary to stem the flow of moral decay that seemed so prevalent among colonial children.<sup>30</sup> However, it was soon realised by even the most hardline Dutch thinkers that English was to be increasingly essential to education, and should be taught to all pupils accordingly. This was more a concession of pride than anything else, because as Robert Ross notes the majority of the Cape Dutch were already bilingual.<sup>31</sup> It was thus in the area of education that the Dutch could claim that they were willing to work with rather than against the liberal reformers. By 1840, the school which had been open for 11 years was found to offer sound education in both English and Dutch. Such was its success that it attracted Dutch pupils not only from the city but also the more affluent rural districts.<sup>32</sup>

With the push in education came the drive in other areas of reform. One citizen in particular noted the tendency of schools to produce poor posture in their students, especially girls, because of the lack of movement during day to day classes, and argued that there should be a specific exercise

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<sup>27</sup> *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 7 May 1830.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> For references to Cape Dutch schooling, see also: *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 26 September 1837 and 26 September 1843. Both stress the competition for prizes based on skill in Dutch and English, as well as general studies.

<sup>31</sup> Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 55-60.

<sup>32</sup> Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town*, 134-135.

plan implemented. Not content on reducing back problems, ‘M.T.’ proceeded on a discussion of personal hygiene: ‘*Bathing*, indeed, is of so great importance that it ought to be made an object of political economy.’<sup>33</sup> Certainly what is presented seems very much in the spirit of the liberal Enlightenment, and it therefore seems likely that ‘M.T.’ and John Fairbairn would have found a great deal of agreement on the subject of education.<sup>34</sup> However unlike his British counterparts, Brand and his colleagues showed little interest in the education of non-whites, and it was thus assumed that this would always be an area of exclusivity. Even in his claims of tolerance in education, Boniface made it quite clear that this area would not be open for compromise.<sup>35</sup> Given the scarcity of Dutch cultural institutions in comparison with the British, it seems that a great deal of the impetus for reform came from British ideas, because it was here that both sides managed to work together.

*De Zuid Afrikaan* may have viewed itself as an enlightened publication but this did not necessarily make it a liberal one. Brand may have pushed for Responsible government, but his sympathies lay in the paternalist ideology of the slave owners.<sup>36</sup> As Andre Du Toit and Herman Giliomee argue, the Cape Dutch, unlike those on the frontier had a well established political tradition, one that reached as far back as the Cape Patriots of the 1780s, and there is no doubt that such figures saw themselves as the elite of the colony.<sup>37</sup> In this sense they saw no contradiction between criticising the *Voortrekkers* and their own position. Note the following example:

To call these men Boers, is nothing short of a libel on the peaceful and well disposed colonists of the Cape. They are rebels, traitors, and plunderers, and as such they must be treated.<sup>38</sup>

The Cape Dutch thus had their own identity, in which geography was key as well as language. Brand was not necessarily arguing that the Great Trek was treason, but rather, rejecting modernity in favour of scratching a living out of the bare land made little sense. Given that the British had already secured their positions as the elite of the colony, they saw little need to leave, and chose instead to critique colonial policy from the comfort of their own homes.

While Brand supported the idea of a free press, he and indeed many of his contributors argued that the *South African Commercial Advertiser* supported a monopoly of ideas, thus forcing liberal humanitarianism on the rest of the colony. As Uday S Mehta has noted, liberalism by its very nature is exclusive, because the very assumptions it rests on (equality, freedom and rationality)

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33 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 15 December 1837.

34 The *South African Commercial Advertiser* carried a number of articles on colonial education for example see 6 April 1836.

35 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 7 May 1830.

36 See John Edward Mason, ‘Hendrik Albertus and his ex-slave Mey: a drama in three acts,’ *Journal of African History*, Vol. 31, (1990), 423-445. Edward Mason, ‘Paternalism Under Siege: slavery in theory & practice during the era of reform c1825 through to Emancipation,’ in *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and its Legacy in Nineteenth Century Cape Colony*, eds. Nigel Worden and Clifton Crais, (Johannesburg: Witwatersand University Press, 1994), 45-77.

37 Andre Du Toit and Hermann Giliomee, *Afrikaner Political Thought Volume One: 1780-1850*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 246.

38 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 2 May 1843.

hegemonically dominate all other forms of political identity.<sup>39</sup> The Cape intellectuals reacted to what they saw as a foreign power taking over their culture and united to counter this perceived threat.<sup>40</sup> However, despite their vocal criticisms of the *South African Commercial Advertiser* and the humanitarian initiatives of Dr Phillip, the Cape Dutch thought of themselves as British subjects, and to say anything against this was heresy.<sup>41</sup> Indeed when Brand was informed of the accusations of anti-Britishness among the Cape elite, he instructed them to take justice in that most British of ways: to sue for libel.<sup>42</sup>

As Kirsten McKenzie has shown, the use of the courts to settle affronts to honour was becoming increasingly widespread throughout the British Empire in the 1830s onwards.<sup>43</sup> For such a Dutch publication, the paper carried a surprising amount of news about British affairs, including royalty, and, from the 1840s onwards began to place the British standard together with the original insignia.<sup>44</sup> Thus while *De Zuid Afrikaan* may have been hostile to Fairbairn's liberalism, that did not stop it picking up less pronounced traits, though this necessarily made for an incoherent ideology, a by-product of the transition between eras.

### Municipal Institutions

Of all the issues that *De Zuid Afrikaan* took up, it was public works and institutions that were of most interest to its readers, and it is here that we can best see the relationship between the Cape Dutch and the city. 'A good police force is undoubtedly the best guarantee of life and property of all subjects' wrote Brand.<sup>45</sup> He continued: 'For the introduction however, of a good system of Police, it is necessary that each member of society should know their station.'<sup>46</sup> In the spirit of a true conservative he went on to argue that the removal of the old system of the Burgher senate was to the detriment of the colony. Still young when the system was replaced (and studying away from the Cape) he would not have known the high levels of violence during VOC Cape Town.<sup>47</sup>

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39 Uday S. Mehta, 'Liberal Strategies of Exclusion,' in *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, eds. Ann Laura Stoler and Fredrick Cooper, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 60-61.

40 See Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town*, 157-159. Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 40-51. The Cape Dutch intellectuals await treatment as a complete subject.

41 On the well documented thought of John Fairbairn and the *South African Commercial Advertiser* see John M. MacKenzie, "'To Enlighten South Africa': The Creation of a Free Press at the Cape in the Early Nineteenth Century,' in *Media and the British Empire*, ed. Chandrika Kaul, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 20-36. Kirsten McKenzie, "'Franklins of the Cape": The South African Commercial Advertiser and the Creation of a Colonial Public Sphere, 1824-1854,' *Kronos*, Vol. 35, (1998/99), 88-102. For press reactions to British hegemony see: John Lambert, "'The thinking is done in London": South Africa's English Language Press and Imperialism,' in *Media and the British Empire*, ed. Chandrika Kaul, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 37-54.

42 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 24 January 1843.

43 Kirsten McKenzie, 'Of Convicts and Capitalists: Honour and Colonial Commerce in 1830s Cape Town and Sydney,' *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 18, (2002), 200-222. McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies*, 60-90.

44 Apparently *De Zuid Afrikaan* had its own royal correspondent, see 5 December 1843.

45 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 21 February 1834.

46 Ibid.

47 On violence in VOC Cape Town see Worden, 'Demanding Satisfaction,' 32-47. Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 1-39. Nicola Taylor, 'A Scapegoat on the Streets of Cape Town,' *Historical Approaches*, Vol. 4, (2007), 12-18.

Of course Brand would not have been alone in wishing for the removal of the current police force, which as Katherine Elks notes was far from effective: 'As the police and policed were of similar class backgrounds, they were invariably prone to the same temptations (e.g. prostitutes, gambling, alcohol) both proving equally unable to resist.'<sup>48</sup> Unfortunately the vast majority of urban histories do not examine public institutions in any detail, the result of which is that they create a history in the city, but not of the city. Worden, Van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith's work for example devotes only three pages to policing, and six pages to municipal structures.<sup>49</sup> In order to understand urban life in its entirety we need to examine how people interact to shape various institutions and structures.

As part of the push towards responsible government, Brand supported Municipal administration - an area where he joined forces with Fairbairn in promoting the system. It was this valuable institution which rushed through legislation combating illegal firework displays throughout Cape Town. While he did not react in moral outrage as readers of the *South African Commercial Advertiser* did, upon seeing dogs clubbed to death in the street by the police, he reminded readers that a substantial part of Cape Town still had thatched rooves.<sup>50</sup> In this sense the *perceived space* between the two groups was different. The *Advertiser* in the spirit of bourgeois sensibility perceived the public sphere as a danger ridden environment in which the only refuge was within the confines of the home.<sup>51</sup> Certainly this would explain the more closed nature of British houses at the Cape.<sup>52</sup> The urban burgher however still clung longingly to his *stoep* and retained a link, however tenuous, with early Cape culture. For this reason they would not have been concerned by the apparent vice of street life.

Such behaviour was certainly not new to Cape Town. As 'A Subscriber' pointed out, the prevalence of youths rolling barrels of gun powder (from the government stores) through the town on hot windy days was an exercise in pure stupidity.<sup>53</sup> A great many other readers had advice of their own, usually in response to an initiative by the *South African Commercial Advertiser*. 'A Correspondent' wrote on the plan to commission a new spring in the Company Gardens,

I believe that when stronger regulations were established at these pumps, principally in the dry summer season; for example by making one attend to them and impose a *trifling* fine on the waste of water: and when some pumps... were repaired in the proper manner, some thousands of gallons per day would be saved.<sup>54</sup>

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48 Katherine Elks, 'The Police and Crime in Cape Town, 1825-1850,' *Kronos*, Vol. 12, (1987), 47. See also Katherine Elks, 'Crime and Social Control in Cape Town, 1830-1850,' *Studies in the History of Cape Town*, Vol. 6, (1988), 25-43. Kirsten McKenzie, 'Dogs and the Public Sphere,' 235-251.

49 Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town*, 171-177. Bickford-Smith, 'Urban History in the New South Africa,' 289-290.

50 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 17 January 1843. McKenzie, 'Dogs and the Public Sphere,' 235-251.

51 For example see *The South African Commercial Advertiser*, 29 November 1834. McKenzie, 'Dogs and the Public Sphere,' 235-251.

52 McKenzie 'Gender and Honour in Middle Class Cape Town,' 57-76

53 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 15 December 1837.

54 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 22 March 1833.

Others took their complaints further and directly blamed the *South African Commercial Advertiser* for the state of things:

If we are to credit the *Commercial Advertiser* our colony must be in a flourishing state... In contradiction erroneous and chimerical assumptions let me state a few simple facts. Has a single stone of this long promised jetty been yet laid? As [for] regular public roads, where are they?<sup>55</sup>

The argument is clear that the (British) liberals have emptied the public treasury, yet there is nothing to show for it. Taxes had been raised, but money had been spent poorly, lost in a bureaucratic tangle.

For a colony experiencing rapid growth, it was vital to get the provision of services right. Thomas Bowler's 1845 painting of the Town House shows the administrative centre as it would have looked during this economic boom, surrounded by similar buildings in various states of repair.<sup>56</sup> Even in this period Greenmarket Square had not managed to lose the tents of the local traders, which sat outside in a chaotic sprawl. Note particularly the flecking paint and uneven surface which fills the picture. Thus, where the *Advertiser* saw opportunity, *De Zuid Afrikaan*, perhaps more realistically, saw the squandering of public assets.

To make matters worse some liberals seemed to display a level of apathy towards the very institution they were attempting to create, the Municipal Council.<sup>57</sup> However we must look beyond the mere cynicism; given the relative failure of stable local government until 1867, there was an element of truth in the complaint. Besides, given the tone of the letter, it is doubtful whether this citizen would have participated in the political process. Thus while both sides decried the process as a failure, the Cape Dutch found it easier to blame the problems entirely on someone else. Brand certainly supported improving the city, and was concerned about the degrading effects of alcohol among other things, but this would have to be done without spending so much money.<sup>58</sup> This was tempered with a nostalgic look to the past, which therefore gave a level of hostility to the British settlers. There was a general feeling that Cape Town as a place was being ruined by liberal interference, which should be challenged vociferously.

## Slavery

The slave owners were where Brand found his strongest support. Indeed, to the Cape Dutch slavery was not simply a system of bonded labour, but a system of social relations. Unlike the industrial scale plantations of the Southern United States, slavery in the Cape was a much smaller scale affair. The fact that the majority of owners could not afford separate quarters for their slaves meant that they became an integral part of the family.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, owners cherished the opportunity to reward good behaviour and punish the bad, a 'carrot and stick' relationship. Of course as John Mason notes:

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<sup>55</sup> *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 1 February 1833.

<sup>56</sup> Thomas Bowler, (1845), in Worden, van Heyningen and Bickford-Smith, *Cape Town*, 171.

<sup>57</sup> *De Zuid Afrikaan* 13 January 1837.

<sup>58</sup> Elks, 'Crime and Social Control in Cape Town,' 28.

<sup>59</sup> Mason, 'Paternalism under siege,' 57.

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Paternalism’s humane aspects complemented and often masked elements that degraded, oppressed, and exploited. Paternalism was a compromise, but it was one that was constantly renegotiated. Slaves alternately resisted and acquiesced to their owner’s demands; slaveowners coerced and indulged.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, nothing was ever constant in the paternalist world; a slave may be beaten for a breach of conduct, but they could equally be rewarded, and may even have their punishment commuted. Take the following notice for example: ‘Warning, My Negro Apprentice “Voontje” having absconded on Friday last.’<sup>61</sup> The tone of the letter suggests that Mr Daneel was clearly fond of his Apprentice; indeed it seems almost playful.

Urban slaves generally found it easier to adapt to captivity because it was more difficult to control their movement, and as a result were to some extent able to maintain their own families while in captivity. Indeed, it was common for slaves to meet in Green Market Square and compare hardships. Even in the Heerengracht slaves mixed with the free burghers while on errands for their masters and had their own leisure time.<sup>62</sup> Of course the arrival of British liberals with their free markets eventually put an end to the paternalist discourse in the city. Of course urban slavery had begun to fade away well before the amelioration legislation was introduced. In fact, the demise of urban slavery had much more to do with banning of international slave trading in 1808, but did not end slavery itself. Thus, the few slaves still left in the city became a precious commodity.<sup>63</sup> When the compensation fund was announced in 1834, Brand and his colleagues were relieved; the financial system could be built upon, and public works undertaken. However he was quick to remind his readers that the scheme was not without its problems: ‘The independent little Farmer of little capital, who now trudges upon his little farm, will no longer be able to command free labour and support for his establishment at present. That class will necessarily merge into a state of tenantry.’<sup>64</sup> Brand’s heartfelt appeal to the yeoman farmer, struggling against the odds would have struck a chord with most readers. Note as well the contradiction in his stance on public works.

Fairbairn had sold the scheme as providing the engine for economic growth in the new colony, but this did not satisfy all.<sup>65</sup> The link between slavery and Cape commerce receives detailed coverage by Lalou Meltzer, however his work does suffer from neglecting the attitudes of those involved in the debate. We know what actions people took but not why. Of course the majority of Cape Dutch citizens far from floundered under the compensation scheme, and the result was an establishment of native financial institutions, but even so the tone was one of concern for financial loss.<sup>66</sup> The scheme continued to take a hostile stance against what it saw as British merchant interests, and it was for this reason that it marketed its institutions to the small scale Dutch wine merchants and

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>61</sup> *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 7 January 1843 and 28 May 1830.

<sup>62</sup> Andrew Bank, ‘The Erosion of Urban Slavery at the Cape,’ in *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and its Legacy in Nineteenth Century Cape Colony*, eds. Nigel Worden and Clifton Crais, (Johannesburg: Witwatersand University Press, 1994), 83-85.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>64</sup> *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 23 March 1834.

<sup>65</sup> See Lalou Meltzer, ‘Emancipation, Commerce & the role of John Fairbairn’s Advertiser,’ in *Breaking the Chains: Slavery and its Legacy in Nineteenth Century Cape Colony*, eds. Nigel Worden and Clifton Crais, (Johannesburg: Witwatersand University Press, 1994), 170-199.

<sup>66</sup> *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 23 August 1835, cited in Meltzer, ‘The Role of John Fairbairn’s Advertiser,’ 188.

growers.<sup>67</sup> The other key concern was the Vagrancy laws which produced heated debate within the colony. In one particularly heated editorial, Brand warned that the *Advertiser* was against the legislation, which he believed was causing a threat to public safety.<sup>68</sup> However his real argument was that he lamented the loss of their old Paternalist way of life, and thus the campaign against Vagrancy must be seen in this light, a vain attempt to protect a dying way of life.<sup>69</sup>

## Conclusion

Cape Dutch culture as seen in *De Zuid Afrikaan* was trapped in between two worlds. On the one hand there was the old paternalist slave system which presented a close knit family, within an almost medieval framework of social relations. However such culture was also a product of the Enlightenment and as such did find some common ground in areas of education and social improvement. On institutions, they balanced half-hearted attempts at local governance with cynical attacks on the *Advertiser*. They also borrowed the British conception of high culture in formulating social practices. Perhaps even more than the British they began to use *conceived space* as a way of separating themselves from undesirable elements. Thus while urban Dutch culture of Cape Town was challenged by the British arrival, it ultimately adapted and survived. Hopefully more research will be conducted on this area. Finally, far from declining the process of cultural negotiation made for a much richer urban culture.

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67 Meltzer, 'The Role of John Fairbairn's Advertiser,' 192. For a theoretical discussion of the role of culture in economic networks see Andrew Thompson, 'The Power and Privileges of Association: Co-Ethnic Networks and the Economic Life of the British Imperial World,' *South African Historical Journal*, Vol. 56, (2006), 43-59.

68 *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 3 October 1834, see also 'Protect the Blacks But Equally Protect the Whites,' 3 May 1839, in Du Toit and Giliomee, *Afrikaner Political Thought*, 74-75.

69 Being unable to control slaves was clearly too much for some, and manifested itself in petty complaints. In one example this took the form of accusations of favouritism amongst Malay coachmen, see *De Zuid Afrikaan*, 6 January 1837.

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