Uncertain Curature

In and Out of the Archive

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edited by
CAROLYN HAMILTON AND PIPPA SKOTNES

with contributions by

Fritha Langerman | Pippa Skotnes | David Cohen | Mbongiseni Buthelezi | Nick Shepherd and Alejandro Haber | Marlene Winberg | Carolyn Hamilton and Nessa Leibhammer | Michael Nixon | Andrew Putter | Patricia Davison and George Mahashe | Danny Herwitz | Carine Zaayman | Kylie Thomas | Litheko Modisane | Alexandra Dodd

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Anarchive (Picturing Absence)

Carine Zaayman

Within the arena of critical investigations of archive, much work has been done to address the fact that a multitude of omissions necessarily shadow any archive. Most of this work has, however, focused on what has been left out of the archive, lost in the course of time or ignored as an effect of extant power structures at the time in which an archive is established. In this chapter, I want to approach the notion of what is missing from the archive differently. I do not attempt a reconstruction, nor do I aim to present a fuller picture of history. Instead, I bring absence itself squarely into focus. I will be entering into a terrain that deals directly with that which is outside the archive, and suggest that this area might usefully be thought of as the 'anarchive'.[1]

Krotoa

The problem of absence exists in a revealing way when one considers the archive of the Van Riebeeck-era Khoi woman named Krotoa. Though a marginal figure in the archives, Krotoa is nonetheless present, virtually anomalously, as a colonial subject – a Khoi woman – and is consequently regarded as possessing a voice of some kind. Due to her (albeit liminal) presence, she has come to signify the loss of others, women and Khoikhoi especially, who did not make it into the archives. Because of her presence, pressure is exerted on what little we know of Krotoa to signal the loss of history of these other unrepresented colonial subjects, to represent them.

'Eva' was the name that the first governor of the Cape, Jan van Riebeeck, gave Krotoa, and by which she was known to the Dutch community populating the VOC refreshment

1. In his article 'An Archival Impulse' (2004), Hal Foster discusses the way in which artists have referenced the archive in their production and makes reference to the notion of an 'anarchival impulse' (Foster 2004, 5). My use of the term 'anarchive' had an independent genesis, as it emerged prior to my encounter with his text. Although this presents a striking example of coincidental nomenclature, I do not draw on Foster in my construction of the term. Foster does not expand further on the notion of anarchive, and does not offer a definition as such. Instead, he loosely connects the term to 'obscure origins', or the marginal archival material that seems to be favoured by artists when choosing source material. His notion is distinct from the one outlined and mobilised in my argument here, in that I employ the term to speak about not only that which has been left out or marginalised in the formation of an archive, but more specifically that which escapes archives as such. This includes the interior life of historical subjects and the desire to think about the 'presentness' of the past.

station that would later become Cape Town. This renaming would cast her in the role of a kind of first woman, an origin and, to be sure, a primitive. Though her new name echoed Eden, the story of Krotoa's life was far less idyllic. After the departure of Van Riebeeck from the colony in 1662, Krotoa was cast out of both Dutch society and her Goringhaicona family. Her husband Pieter van Meerhoff, a Dutch friend of Van Riebeeck, was killed and she lost her children to the law. Many in both societies regarded her as a degenerate.

Archive and the production of a biography

Krotoa's is a story of loss. Though there are extant archival documents, originally contemporary with her life, that mention Krotoa, this material is limited and exists only in the writing of others where she makes but a sketchy appearance. There is no coherent or physical archive dedicated to Krotoa as such. Instead, references to her are spread throughout a series of archival holdings. Most of the primary source material on Krotoa can be found in the journals of Cape governors Van Riebeeck and Wagenaer, as well as the VOC manuscripts housed at the Western Cape Archives and Records Service in Cape Town and the Nationaal Archief in The Hague. Jan van Riebeeck's journals have been reproduced in edited versions,[2] and some recent efforts have been made to collate the information that pertains to Krotoa specifically.[3] The archival holdings around Krotoa present complex challenges of engagement for a contemporary researcher, not only because of the incomplete nature of the available information, but because this information is derived from sources whose understanding of, and empathetic involvement with, Krotoa are limited and biased.

None of these archival records are based on her own words, or even on those close to her, whether the Goringhaicona family into which she was born, her husband or her children. Since the most prominent texts constituting this disparate archive are the VOC documents, it can be imagined that these sources are unsympathetic. Not only do they originate from a cultural frame of reference radically alien to Krotoa (at least at the beginning of her contact with the Dutch), but they also contain texts that

2. See Van Riebeeck's journals as edited by H. B. Thom (1952–8).

3. Vertrees Malherbe's *Krotoa, Called 'Eva': A Woman Between* (1990) is a notable and early example of this.

reveal Van Riebeeck's and Wagenaer's exasperation when Krotoa's behaviour did not conform to their expectations of 'Eva'. Perhaps because of this conflict in the very fabric of her archive, which renders it particularly fertile for postcolonial discourse, Krotoa has relatively high visibility for a marginal figure in contemporary post-apartheid South Africa. Her archive shows a readiness to become representative of what is missing, that is, to speak for subjects neglected within the colonial records of the past.

One of the most important historical texts from which information on Krotoa as a member of the Khoi community is garnered is Richard Elphick's book *Kraal and Castle* (1977), which is fundamentally informed by the governors' journals. Key pieces of Krotoa's story, as outlined in Elphick's text, include the fact that at around age nine or ten Krotoa served in Van Riebeeck's household at the fort and stayed with the family – at first on a temporary basis, but later permanently – and received religious instruction from Jan's wife, Maria de la Quellerie (Elphick 1977,107). Elphick further states that at around age 15 Krotoa, although claiming to have a 'Dutch heart', left the fort and travelled to the interior for reasons unknown to the Dutch. It is speculated that, since she was at the age of puberty, she had left to 'undergo the ceremonial prescribed for every girl of her age'. Elphick suggests that Krotoa first tried to visit her mother's family (the Goringhaiqua), but after being rejected, attacked and robbed by members of this group, she sought refuge with her 'sister', the wife of Oedasoa, a chief of the Cochoqua.[4] In this short interlude, Krotoa's position as an in-betweener, not only as someone who interprets, but more pressingly as someone who no longer completely belonged to either group, Khoikhoi or European, becomes evident. Elphick further notes the tension between Krotoa and Doman, representative for a group of Khoikhoi that he refers to as the 'Peninsulars' (1977, 109).[5] Doman's group resisted trade with the Dutch and was profoundly hostile to their plans of expansion, an attitude that contributed to the outbreak of the first Khoikhoi–Dutch war in 1659.

Elphick charts the decline of Krotoa's importance within colonial society in the 1660s. He attributes this to the departure of Van Riebeeck and his family, and the fact that she was no longer indispensable

4. Elphick remarks at this point that it is unlikely that this woman was Krotoa's biological sister, since Krotoa most probably did not use the word 'sister' in the same way as the Dutch (1977, 107).

5. As opposed to the Khoikhoi groups based north and north-east of Table Bay to which Krotoa was born.

as an interpreter. He notes that 'she spent more and more time in the company of sailors from the ships, and by November 1663 she had borne two illegitimate children of European patrimony' (1977, 201). Crucially, it is not at all clear whether Pieter van Meerhoff, Van Riebeeck's friend and Krotoa's future husband, was the father of these children, a fact that contemporary accounts of Krotoa, in which she is often cast as the 'rainbow mother' of South Africa, do not mention. Interestingly, this is an aspect of her life that is fudged in many contemporary fictionalised accounts of Krotoa's life, where it is perpetually implied that Pieter fathered all Krotoa's children, as though to expunge the blemish of what may appear to be unsavoury behaviour for a figure with such symbolic significance.

The final entries on Krotoa in Elphick's text concern her marriage to Van Meerhoff, their time at Robben Island, where he was appointed superintendent, her increasing dependency on alcohol, as well as her erratic behaviour as a result of it (for which she was banished to the island on numerous occasions) and her death on 29 July 1674 (1977, 201–3).

Vertrees Malherbe draws heavily on Elphick's *Kraal and Castle*, as well as H. C. V. Leibbrandt's *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope (1896–1901)* and Jan van Riebeeck's journals, for her brief volume entitled *Krotoa, Called 'Eva': A Woman Between* (1990). This publication, and Karen Press's children's book *Bird Heart Stoning the Sea: Krotoa's story* (1990), are the first texts, apart from a series of articles by M. K. Jeffreys in *Drum* magazine in the 1950s, that focus on Krotoa exclusively, or attempt to provide a biography of sorts. The date is significant as it corresponds with the transitional phase in South Africa, and the realisation of democracy in the country. After this publication in the early 1990s, an upsurge in interest in Krotoa appears in both historical and academic fields, as well as the arts – creative writing and visual arts in particular. This would suggest that Krotoa's story holds some special resonance within the post-apartheid world, a resonance that has since become increasingly pronounced.

In her author's note, Malherbe (1990, ii) describes her project thus:

Nobody Knows

Philip Roth's 'The Human Stain' (2000) invokes the sense of the openness of the present. It is the product of a narrator who reconstructs someone else's life; revolving around the omphalos of the question concerning what can be known about a lived life:
What underlies the anarchy of the train of events, the uncertainties, the mishaps, the disunity, the shocking irregularities that define human affairs? Nobody knows, Professor Roux. 'Everyone knows' is the invocation of the cliché and the beginning of the banalisation of experience, and it's the solemnity and the sense of authority that people have in voicing the cliché that's so insufferable. What we know is that, in an unclichéd way, nobody knows anything. You can't know anything. The things you know you don't know. Intention? Motive? Consequence? Meaning? All that we don't know is astonishing. Even more astonishing is what passes for knowing. (Roth 2000, 208)

Ruin

One way in which loss as irredeemable absence has been figured poetically in literature and art is with the ruin. The figure of the ruin is familiar to us particularly through its use in Romanticism. It has, however, been employed in a diverse array of contexts. An instance of this is Denis Diderot's writings on the subject. Anne Betty

> This account is a historian's attempt to present the details and assess the meaning of an individual's life. But the reader will certainly detect many gaps. There is clearly the need – for an anthropologist perhaps – to place Krotoa in context as a woman in Khoikhoi culture first, and as a transplant in the culture of the European colonists. Questions have occurred to me which I have felt unable to address. For example, what did her marriage mean in terms of her status in the eyes of the Khoikhoi and of the Dutch? What would have been the impact on Krotoa herself? Can we tease out an explanation, or assume proof, from her denunciation as a drunkard and a prostitute during the last, widowed years of her young life? Researchers in the field of women's studies will produce yet other questions.

In the main body of her text, Malherbe does not continue in the emotive tone conveyed by words such as 'the last, widowed years of her young life', but rather confines herself to a fact-based narrative, producing what comes across as a stuttering account gained from the little material available. An undertone of suspicion can even be inferred from the way she approaches these sources: 'In October 1657 we are told that "Eva", who was "aged 15 or 16" and "beginning to speak Dutch well", questioned some visiting "Saldanhars" on Van Riebeeck's behalf' (1990, 14). Such a multitude of quotation marks signals the self-conscious distance Malherbe sets up between herself and Van Riebeeck's words. It is clear that Malherbe is painfully anxious about using what from a late 1990s perspective is a tainted archive in order to tell a story that is intended to lay bare some of the problematic aspects of the colonial dynamic itself. Despite the profound apprehension she displays at her inescapable reliance on colonial documents and words, Malherbe is not compelled to fill the 'many gaps' she has identified with imaginative musings or creative interpretation that exceeds the limits of her sources. This is perhaps due to what she considers 'permissible' for a historian, the label with which she identifies herself from the outset. Nevertheless, she offers

Weinshenker remarks in her article 'Diderot's Use of the Ruin-Image' (1973):

The ruins, by calling to mind their former splendor and flourishing state, emphasize the passage of time between the past and present. The fragment of bas-relief which refers to a still earlier event pushes the sense of elapsed time even further back. It thereby seconds the main idea, as a proper accessory ought, but also extends the dimension of time, giving greater stimulation to the imagination.

What I find of interest here is the fact that the figure of the ruin, while irrevocably referencing the past, does not turn on the imagining of the ruin as an entire building as it existed before ruination. The ruin as image brings into play the passage of time. It foregrounds the relationship between the present and the past, casting the past at a great distance from the present, but in such a way that situates the present in relation to it.

Florence Hetzler's definition of ruin similarly foregrounds the inherently integrated nature of time with ruin, or what she terms 'ruin time':

I believe that ruins may be considered works of art just as works of music, painting, etc., may be. A ruin, however, is a special work of art. It includes the human-made and the nature-made and has its own time, place, space, life and lives. Ruin time is immanent in a ruin and this time includes the time when it was first built, that is, the time when it was not a ruin; the time

suggestive phrases, such as 'We can only guess at Krotoa's feelings when her Dutch family of ten years' standing left the Cape' (1990, 44), and 'We can only guess at Krotoa's feelings from an incident which occurred on her way back to the Cochoqua camp' (1990, 33). Rather than offering the reader an interpretation from her own perspective, she invites us to enter a moment of private imagination and projection, obliquely drawing us into the realm of emotion and empathy.

Reconstruction

It is clear that the sparse nature of Krotoa's archive presents a powerful challenge to those who would bring her into the contemporary imagination. Some historians, but mostly authors of creative non-fiction, have responded to this challenge largely by attempting to produce some kind of imaginative reconstruction. Krotoa's life has proved a popular subject within South African writing as well as visual art of the last 20 years.[6] These authors take the fragments from Krotoa's archive and attempt to construct from them a fuller picture, and, in this reconstruction, the pressure on Krotoa to be representative, in lieu of the loss of history of colonial subjects, becomes excessive.

Contemporary perspectives on Krotoa, though stemming from postcolonial, post-apartheid desires, are as much enmeshed in myth and fantasy as her renaming as 'Eva'. In many senses, these are simply new clothes spun from the same mythical threads that the Dutch had woven around her in order to deal with her alterity. In twentieth-century retellings, Krotoa's role as an in-between figure, interpreter and later wife of a Dutch man, mother of mixed-race children, takes precedence. The difficulties of her later life are taken as exemplary evidence of the injustices suffered by colonial subjects at the hands of colonial powers. Ironic though it may be, at the heart of this continuation of colonial identity in narratives that would cast her as hero – 'a rainbow mother', or the first 'true South African' – is the fact that all knowledge about Krotoa is gained obliquely.

A slew of historical and pseudo-historical works of fiction have arisen that draw on Elphick's text. Some of the most notable of

6. Andrew Putter's video installation *Secretly I will love you more* (2007) and Lien Botha's exhibition at the Castle of Good Hope *Krotoa's room* (1995) are notable examples of this.

7. Children of the Company (the VOC).

8. Islands. In this paper I will refer to the Afrikaans text.

9. Nongqawuse (c. 1840–98), a Xhosa prophetess who lived in what is now the Eastern Cape. In 1856 she persuaded the amaXhosa to kill all their cattle and abandon their crops, as she prophesied that by doing so, the ancestors of her people would rise up from the dead and the world would be returned to the pristine state it was in before the arrival of the English colonists (Samuelson 2007, 54).

10. Sara Baartman (1789–1815) was famously taken from Cape Town to London and later to Paris, where she was displayed as the 'Hottentot Venus'. Her story has been positioned as a hallmark of the abominable treatment of the native people of southern Africa by colonial powers.

11. Controversial figure Winnie Madikizela-Mandela is a complex presence in South African history. While she is regarded as a vital freedom fighter by many, her legacy is nonetheless tainted by accusations of torture and murder.

these include the poet Karen Press's *Bird Heart Stoning the Sea: Krotoa's Story* (1990), a chapter on Krotoa in Karel Schoeman's *Kinders van die Kompanjie* (2006),[7] Trudie Bloem's *Krotoa–Eva: The Woman from Robben Island* (1999), André Brink's *Imaginings of Sand* (1996) and Dan Sleigh's *Eilande* (2004).[8] These fictions have courted some criticism. In a chapter entitled 'Krotoa–Eva: Translator, Traitor, "Rainbow" Mother', published in her volume *Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women? Stories of the South African Transition* (2007), Meg Samuelson states that through her analysis of the ways in which Krotoa has been figured in South African post-apartheid literature, she aims to 'start unpacking the sentimental myth of "rainbow" nationalism and its consolidation through the use of historical female figures' (15). In her argument, she considers the representation of Krotoa in André Brink's *Imaginings of Sand* as well as Sleigh's *Eilande* and Bloem's *Krotoa–Eva: The Woman from Robben Island*. The rest of her text concerns the other female figures that have been elevated in South African discourse as symbolic of struggle, violence and liberation, including Nongqawuse,[9] Sara Baartman[10] and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela.[11]

Samuelson's text is particularly useful in its critical regard of certain mythologising strategies employed in the writing of Krotoa's story. What is particularly problematic in this mythologising is what Samuelson calls the 'domesticating project', that is, to gloss over the difficulties of fitting Krotoa into any framework, whether a colonial one or a post-apartheid one. Of primary significance in Samuelson's argument is the use of Krotoa by white writers to claim ancestry and a sense of belonging in South Africa. For Samuelson, Krotoa is either figured as a translator, one with a voice and capable of deception, or becomes recuperated in the form of a mother, which is a voiceless body, and progenitor of post-apartheid South African hybridity: 'Those white South Africans who stake a genetic claim on Krotoa–Eva in order to carve out a sense of national belonging as "pale natives" take up this recuperating, domesticating project, albeit at times unwittingly' (19).

of its maturation as a ruin; the time of the birds, bees, bats and butterflies that may live in or on the ruin; the cosmological time of the land that supports it and is part of it and will take back to itself the man-made part eventually; as well as the sidereal time of the stars, sun and clouds that shine upon it, shadow it and are part of it. A ruin is the disjunctive product of the intrusion of nature upon the human-made without loss of the unity that our species produced. (1988, 51)

There is a unity in the ruin, a unity defined by the aspect of time that measures from the past to the present. My interest in the ruin is, however, not based on a proliferation of physical ruins somehow related to Krotoa. Even so, the ruin interests me as a way in which to think about the integration of time in relation to a site that carries some historical significance in relation to her life, and a figurative device by which to call that into being. What is instructive about the ruin is that it functions not to invoke a reconstruction of a full architectural structure that has degenerated. Rather, its wholeness is constituted by its incompleteness.

Remnant

The ruin is analogous to the figure of the remnant. My utilisation of 'remnant' in relation to figuring the past is informed by Giorgio Agamben's notion of the 'remnant' as regards history, historical subjects, witnesses and memory. I am not

By alerting the reader to the political implications of the myths around Krotoa, Samuelson's analyses provide an important backdrop against which to read all fiction based on her. It is significant that the construction of the myth is largely an effect of the bias of the archives of colonial documents, which have left many silences. However, while these myths are also implicitly critical of the colonial legacy, the way in which they reinvent the stories is itself shaped by that legacy.

The conception of Krotoa as an in-between figure is a key attribute of her characterisation in the literature from the 1990s onward. This is especially apparent in historical fiction based on her life story. A prime example is Bloem's *Krotoa–Eva: The Woman from Robben Island*. On the dustjacket we read that Bloem has 'worked as a librarian at the Johannesburg Library, the South African Library and Cape Provincial Education Library, as an editor, translator and indexer . . . [S]he researched Krotoa's life over many years, making copious notes, and finally writing this book'.

The notion that the author is an authority on already published material is reaffirmed by various strategies within the text: the use of dates to mark the start of every chapter (positioning it within a specific period); the addition of maps that situate the narrative in an actual locale (1999, 5–6); the inclusion of a glossary of Dutch and Khoikhoi words that allows the author to employ a vernacular tone (1999, 227–8, 238); an extensive list of what are called 'Characters', such as Autshumao, Doman and Oedasoa, that contains historically accurate facts on these figures (1999, 229–37); and a bibliography



(1999, 239). All of these devices have the effect of situating the narrative as truthful, or at least historically accurate, and serve to underscore the historical foundation of the narrative, since these inclusions are not conventionally present in works of fiction.

Intriguingly, Bloem also presents what appear to be extracts of letters written by Pieter van Meerhoff (1999, 140–2; 187–8; 203–14). However, these letters (in a break with the markers of accuracy mentioned above) are not referenced, and no other information is given concerning their origin, thus leaving one to infer that they are the author's invention. Although written in a style consistent with that of the time, they are somewhat too intimate, and too salacious in content, for me to accept that they would find themselves included in the VOC's archives and, even if they were, that they would not have been reprinted in earlier texts. Here is an exemplary extract: 'How can I explain to you the sincere affection which I have come to feel for Eva? Not one woman have I seen who surpasses Eva in shapeliness of form and sweetness of expression and manner' (1999, 2–7). This leads me to regard them as a literary device intended to create a convincing sense of realism through invoking a sense of intimacy and affect.

Unlike the 'truth-telling' biographies of the historians, Bloem's text focuses from the outset on imagining Krotoa's subjectivity by articulating her thoughts and experiences in the manner of a novel. In fact, it is as though Bloem sets out to answer some of the questions posed by Malherbe concerning what Krotoa would have felt about the dramatic events of her life. The first sentences of the text demonstrate how strikingly different the tone of this narrative is from that of Elphick, Malherbe and Schoeman: 'She becomes aware of the pain in her chest and the cold, and thinks: I did not die. She remembers being carried by two men, and hearing somebody say, "Put the drunken slut in here. She won't last through the night"' (1999, 7). With these words, Bloem immediately situates her text from Krotoa's perspective. Moreover, the contemporary reader cannot help being disturbed by the words of Krotoa's jailers ('drunken slut'), and in this way Bloem strategically evokes a sense of empathy at the injustice and violence contained in Krotoa's story.

employing Agamben's work on the remnant as a theoretical framework, but rather as a trigger that has guided my thinking in articulating the anarchive. In addition, Agamben's text is primarily intended to articulate these notions in relation to the Holocaust and its survivors. Although the context is radically different in this text, I believe that the notion of the remnant may be productively employed here.

In Agamben's writing the 'remnant' is a figure distinct from the 'fragment'. If one follows the logic of the work of an archaeologist or historian, a fragment is a part of an object or document that survives from its original context to the present day and assists in reconstructing the past, be it social, economic or cultural conditions or practices. A remnant, in contradistinction, cannot be used for reconstruction. Instead, it is simply something that is left, something that survives, and something that cannot be reduced to being an emblem of the past: 'In this light, the remnant in no way designates something less than a whole but instead designates the whole (people, individual, language) seen in a new light and having taken on a different and new "consistency"' (De la Durantaye 2009, 301).

Understood in this way, a remnant cannot be viewed as part of a larger whole that gives it meaning, but rather something that, though incomplete, is a whole in itself. As I reflect on Krotoa's presence in

Krotoa is typified by Bloem as an in-between figure, no longer bearing her Khoikhoi name and carrying the label 'Krotoa–Eva', a signifier of her identity as a doubly coded subject. The novel itself manifests as an in-between text: between history and fiction, between the archive and her imaginative reconstructions (through her reliance on Elphick's *Kraal and Castle* and Thom's edition of Van Riebeeck's journals and later studies of Khoikhoi culture, such as George Stow's *Native Races of South Africa* [1905] and Gabriël Nienaber's *Hottentots* [1963]). To my mind, these tensions are not happily resolved in the text. The authoritative voice of the academic researcher, characteristic of Bloem's style, ultimately fails to provide a convincingly tender portrait of Krotoa. Instead, the characterisation is one-dimensional and reflects a reified comprehension of both the Dutch and the Khoi:

> The days were growing longer and warmer. Even when there was no full moon to celebrate with dancing and singing, Oedasoa's people would congregate around the communal fire inside the circle formed by the huts before they went inside at night. Oedasoa would sometimes summon Krotoa to his side, to discuss the strange pale-skinned people and their ways. (1999, 172)

In 2000 the popular Afrikaans author Dalene Matthee published her 'Historiese roman oor Pieternella en Eva–Krotoa',[12] entitled *Pieternella van die Kaap*.[13] The narrative of this book focuses mainly on Pieternella, Krotoa's daughter, who acts as narrator. Through her memories of her mother, Pieternella tells Krotoa's story in parallel. It is clear that Matthee, like earlier authors, relied heavily on archival material (the VOC documents from the period of governors Van Riebeeck and Wagenaer), the help of researchers such as Dan Sleigh, among others, as well as the volumes of Elphick, Malherbe and Thom). The characteristic depiction of Krotoa as an in-between figure is powerfully present in this text. For example, Pieternella's description of her mother's position as translator:

12 Historical novel about Pieternella and Eva-Krotoa (own translation).

13. In 2009 an English translation of the novel by Malcolm Hacksley was published as *Pieternella, Daughter of Eva*.

14. Two-headed woman. Who had to stand between Hottentot and Ducthman so that the livestock and beads could quietly be taken away and hidden . . . Messenger. From Oedasoa to mister Van Riebeeck. From mister Van Riebeeck to Oedasoa. (Own translation)

Tweekopvrou. Wat tussen Hottentot en Hollander moes gaan staan sodat die vee en die krale stilletjies kon wegkom om weggesteek te word . . . Boodskapdraer. Van Oedasoa na mynheer Van Riebeeck. Van mynheer Van Riebeeck na Oedasoa. (Matthee 2000, 176)[14]

Pieternella's psychological journey, as played out in the narrative, is essentially that of her maturation from early adolescence to marriage (to Daniel Zaaijman), childbearing and womanhood. This is reflected in her physical journey from the Cape to live in Mauritius, and the ultimate return of the Zaaijmans to Cape Town. Throughout this trajectory, Pieternella reflects on her mixed origins and consistently finds herself an outsider to the Dutch community. As illustration, see the following passage in which she converses with a Dutch woman in Mauritius:

Verskoon, ek vergeet, hulle sê jou ma was ook 'n Hottentot – was sy?
Ja.
Gelukkig het jy darem min van die swart geërf! Ha-ha-ha. Gelukkig is jy baie witterig, maar mens kan sien nie heeltemal nie.

the VOC archives, and the way in which contemporary writers have reconstructed and retold her life, it seems to me that the archival material has mostly been employed in line with the notion of the fragment. If one, however, recasts her presence in the archives in terms of remnant, the possibility of her functioning as an emblem disappears. Such a recast might prove productive for moving Krotoa beyond 'Eva'. Doing so is to acknowledge that the silences in her archive are not a side issue, but constitutive of her subjectivity. 'The subject is a sort of remnant . . . It is something that is left over – it represents difference. It is the impossibility for a subject to completely coincide with itself; there always remains a remnant (Agamben 2001, 20).

For Agamben, conceiving of the subject-as-remnant positions it as that which remains when all kinds of identification in terms of grouping have been made. The subject-as-remnant refers to that which cannot be reduced to any larger whole: 'A remnant is what results from every dialectical attempt at exhaustive identification and classification, every attempt to create a community that would completely subsume the singularity of its members' (De la Durantaye 2009, 300).

Positioning a figure such as Krotoa as a remnant means she ceases to be an emblem of the past: *We must cease to look toward . . . historical processes as if they had an apocalyptic or profane telos in which*

Hottentotte is nie swart nie.
Hoe dan?
Jy sal nie verstaan nie. (Matthee 2000, 310)[15]

As is evident from this passage, Matthee's writing is typified by a simplified, colourful and vernacular use of Afrikaans. The effects are exaggerated in this novel, primarily to establish a sense of childlike innocence in Pieternella and a character unblemished by colonial polemics:

Daar was 'n tamboer, sy naam was Arent. En sy vriend, Frans Cuiper, 'n soldaat. Toe dros hulle. Hulle het geweet hulle gaan in vreeslike moeilikheid beland, maar hulle dros sowaar.
'Onnosele goed,' sê haar ma. (Matthee 2000, 93)[16]

In *Pieternella van die Kaap*, Matthee's writing strongly evokes the short phrasing, the plain and direct speech of a child. Her comments regarding both Krotoa and the Dutch appear like those of a child observing, but not understanding, the actions of adults. This stylistic device, together with a narrative imbued with magical realism (especially in her descriptions of Krotoa's Khoikhoi practices, her bafflement at the extent of Dutch hypocrisies and her conversations with Anna, the African slave Daniel buys for her in Mauritius), casts the text in a primitivist light. Krotoa and Anna, and to some extent Pieternella, are depicted as being especially close to nature, in tune with the arcane patterns and signs of the land. Sketching the subaltern in such a primitivist manner is intended as a critique of colonial powers. Stylistically and ideologically, this is in keeping with Matthee's other celebrated texts, *Kringe in 'n Bos* and *Fiela se Kind*, with the result that readers find themselves relating Pieternella and Krotoa to other fictional characters and vehicles of a particular kind of idealism in Matthee's oeuvre. It is not my purpose to mount a critique of the entire novel, but to highlight that in her language and metaphors, Matthee attempts to invert the prejudices within

15. Sorry, I forget, they say your mother was also a Hottentot – was she?
Yes.
Luckily you did not inherit much blackness! Ha-ha-ha. Luckily you are quite pale, but, one can tell, not completely white.
Hottentots are not black.
How so?
You wouldn't understand. (Own translation)

16. There was this drummer, his name was Arent. And his friend, Frans Cuiper, a soldier. Then they deserted. They knew they would be in a lot of trouble, but they deserted anyway. 'Idiots,' says her mother. (Own translation)

the very grain of the archives from which she draws. However, this inversion is still primarily based within its knowledge and bound by the limits of what has been noted in them. Matthee can only answer the silences of Krotoa's archive by myth and further obfuscation.

Andrew Putter, in his video installation *Secretly I will love you more* (2007), presents a perspective that is radically different from that of much of the earlier creative work on Krotoa. This work consists of a video in which a woman, dressed in sixteenth-century Dutch fashion, sings a song in the Nama language. The work is presented alongside a note indicating that the woman is Maria de la Quellerie (Van Riebeeck's wife), and that she is singing a lullaby to Krotoa, whom, according to the artist, she adopted. In this video installation, Putter skews the truth, defying existing archival information by suggesting a particularly intimate and loving relationship between Van Riebeeck's wife and Krotoa. There is no evidence for such an intimate relationship, and Putter's work can be considered somewhat contradictory to the little archival evidentiary material in existence. His is perhaps the most radical interpretation of Krotoa's archival fragments, but still one that focuses on presenting a creative reconstruction, or fiction, and, significantly, one that (self-consciously) constructs a myth.

Anarchive

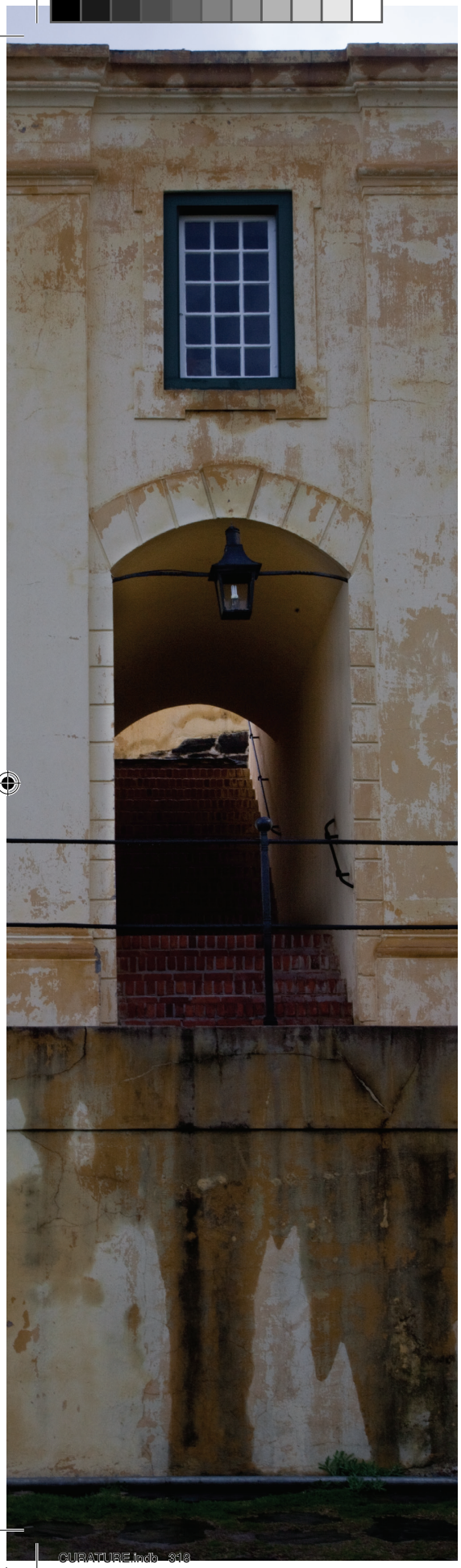
The wealth and variety of historical and creative non-fiction dealing with Krotoa suggests a real desire in the contemporary South African milieu to imagine her life beyond the archival material. These imaginative interpretations do more than just take historical material and work it into a plausible narrative. The meagre amount of material on Krotoa, combined with the pressure on her archive to become representative, means that the imaginative reconstructions have compelling power to bring to mind Krotoa as historical subject. These works in fact become an extension of the archive – archival paratexts perhaps – rendering a distinction between the actual archive and the fictions that imagine her life impossible. It is my contention that

the living being and the speaking being, the inhuman and the human – or any terms of a historical process – are joined in an established, completed humanity and reconciled in a realized identity. This does not mean that, in lacking an end, they are condemned to meaninglessness or the vanity of an infinite, disenchanted drifting. They have not an end, but a remnant. (Agamben 2002, 159)

Crucially, in this passage, Agamben invokes the unique relationship between time and the remnant. Whereas a fragment, being employed in an emblematic fashion, speaks of a past that is finished, the remnant evokes a present within the past, a present that survives, that cannot be consigned to the past. In this sense the remnant is related to Jacques Derrida's use of the term 'trace', a notion that motions towards a past event whose spectre is present but unreadable:

if the trace refers to an absolute past, it is because it obliges us to think of a past that can no longer be understood in the form of a modified presence, the present-past. Since past has always signified present-past, the absolute past that is retained in the trace no longer rigorously merits the name 'past'. Another name to erase. (Derrida 1976, 66)

This is the distinctiveness of the remnant. In its wholeness and its presentness, the remnant is reminiscent of the ruin. To my mind, the remnant speaks of the reality, or even presentness (to invoke the term I used earlier in relation to



these subsequent interventions have become archival traces of the changing social, political, public, aesthetic and academic meanings and interpretations of Krotoa. This process of meaning-making, produced in a variety of forms, makes it difficult to approach the extant materials with the neutrality that might be envisaged by an objective historiography. As I have shown, inspired by the sparse nature of her archive and the compelling character of her story, historians, archivists and writers have laboured to reconstruct her life, and their works constitute an extension of the archive itself. Thus, any definition of the archive of Krotoa cannot simply be located within the boundaries of the physical archive, but has to include the various retellings of her life in works of historical reconstruction and fiction alike.

However, a recurring issue with these reconstructions is the way in which the contexts from which they are produced purpose the texts in specific ways: whether as idolising Krotoa to stand in for a nation of dispossessed subjects or as a figure signifying the hybridity of a contemporary South Africa. With the difficulty of reflecting on Krotoa's archive in mind, it is perhaps exactly the impossibility of reconstruction that haunts all these works – an impossibility that is largely unvoiced. In addition, the loss of the unarchived life, the unarchivable life – the anarchive – is not limited to Krotoa alone. In the sense that she has been rendered emblematic of a host of people whose histories lie outside the archive, the impossibility to archive Krotoa gestures to the social problem of absent archive.

Even though narrative keystones established in Elphick's text, founded on colonial documentation, have remained largely intact in subsequent tellings of Krotoa's story, they cannot be regarded as full accounts of the salient events and concerns in her life. For example, in Elphick's text we have no insight into the love affair between Krotoa and Pieter – extraordinary though it must have been. But how do we understand this relationship apart from what it signals to us today, that is, as a sign of racial mixing in the early colonial history of the Cape? In addition, we know almost nothing about Krotoa's relationship with her mother and

'sister', and how she experienced the alienation from the people with whom she spent her early life. What were Krotoa's thoughts about the mountain, the backdrop against which much of her life was played out, or the sandy dunes of the West Coast, where the ocean's horizon heralded the arrival of enormous changes in her life? How did she feel about her children, whom she abandoned shortly before her death? Krotoa's humanity is all but obscured in an archive where only her effect on the concerns of the colonial powers has been noted.

Any telling of her story can only be shadowed by such absences and one cannot claim that there is an original truth of her life that may be recoverable through an exhaustive mining of the archive. As I have argued, because of the incomplete nature of Krotoa's archive, and the need for imaginative interpretation, the accounts of her life have been invested with much emotion, and are often endowed with special significance for the authors' own contexts. How, then, can Krotoa's archive be engaged in a way that she does not become the bearer of someone else's history as well? This requires us to focus not on attempting a reconstruction from fragments, but rather to think about the impossibility of reconstruction as such. The framework for a profound consideration of the absence of presence is the notion of anarchive.

Bearing the silences within Krotoa's archive in mind, the challenge of conveying the notion of an archive not as a positive figure, a container of information to be mined and used to reconstruct a life into a coherent whole, but as something that speaks of absence and loss, comes into view. Efforts to find what is present do not inform us about what is absent, yet it is necessary to consider what is absent in order to place that which is present. Being incomplete, and an archive that can only be glanced from an oblique angle, Krotoa's presence in archival documents and texts can be framed in terms of the anarchive.

By 'anarchive' I mean that which is not contained by archive, that which is without archive, particularly those things that cannot be captured by documents, fragments and text. My approach seeks

the novel), that is not accessible as such, but irrevocably locked up in the figure. There is a tantalising dynamism in remnant that brings the past into the present in such a way that does not reveal it, or describe it, but communicates its loss.

Empty figures

In 'To Give Memory a Place: Holocaust Photography and the Landscape Tradition', Ulrich Baer posits two examples of photographic works that reference the Holocaust, but that are also emptied of recognisable signs for the Holocaust as such. Baer (2000, 50–1) puts forward a reading of the photographs of Dirk Reinartz and Mikael Levin, stating: *These darkly auratic pictures by Reinartz and Levin – hovering on the brink of our resilient faith in the evidentiary status of the photograph – are all but useless as documentary information in these pictures, however, these photographs nonetheless tell the truth. They challenge our notion of what constitutes knowledge by relying on our deep-seated trust in photography's reality effect to show that really nothing is pictured here or, to phrase this observation differently, that nothing in this picture is real . . . The appeal of these two photographs derives largely from their refusal to disclose within the image the specific source from which they address us. We are left with the impression that these places concern us precisely because we never knew them. The sense of belonging produced by the images' visual perspective and*

17. With reference to fiction, I am not referring to the coherence of a novel as an autonomous artwork, but rather a reader's experience of reading a work of fiction, in which they follow the narrative as it unfolds.

to embody the past through accessing those elements that are not included in conventional notions of the archive. I approach the anarchive as something akin to fiction. I say this because in fiction (here I am thinking of the novel in particular) the manner in which events unfold contributes as much to the meaning of the text as the events themselves. The detours, possibilities and,

indeed, presentness of any given moment in the text render it open at every point.[17]

I approach my reading of the history of Krotoa as though it were such a narrative, with openness and uncertainty, and thereby focus not on what can be reconstructed from evidence, but on that which lies just outside the text.

Embodying absence

Defined in many ways by its silences, Krotoa's archive presents a unique challenge to representation. In avoiding the emblematic reconstructive gesture in representing Krotoa, I attempt to bring the anarchive into view as absence. If the anarchive refers to that which cannot be captured through conventional archival holdings, it calls for an imagining of a lived life. Making Krotoa's anarchive present thus requires not only an imaginative response to Krotoa's narrative, but also an embodied one. Because of this, part of my process has been to visit sites where Krotoa lived in and around Cape Town (most notably the Castle of Good Hope and Robben Island) and the lower West Coast of South Africa. I used my camera as a kind of visual notebook, taking photographs that, to me at least, function as both a mnemonic for, and an evocation of, the experience of standing in the physical space in full cognisance of the palimpsest of history.

This strategy is distinct from the kind of work photographers have mostly done – composing an image that has some (debatable) autonomous authority as image, framed by the rectangle of the film frame.[18] The important considerations to me were, firstly, the journeys towards the sites, which were until that point only constituted through textual descriptions. Secondly, I wanted to foreground those elements that speak directly to sensorial experience, necessitating a body-in-a-place – the angle of a shaft of light, a particular point of view, a momentary arrangement of clouds, and the presence of animals with which one shares the camaraderie of being there.

By using the camera as an embodied notebook, rather than a tool for image-making, the images are, in a sense, emptied of

point of view stands in conflict with the equally powerful sense of nonbelonging and trespass produced by the pastness of the moment captured in the photographs. This tension – between the landscape's invitation to the viewer's projection and photography's inalterable pastness – finds a parallel in the difficulties of representing historical trauma.

In a manner similar to what Baer describes, although within a completely different context, my methodology has been one in which non-representation is a central strategy.

18. This is not to say that all photographers working within the field of contemporary art operate in this way. While throughout the history of photography the cohesiveness of the photographic image has been variously venerated, numerous practitioners have departed from this approach. The work of Sophie Calle is particularly noteworthy in this regard.

representation. The product of journeys and internal reflection, these images are prosaic in nature. Rather than employing positive figuration, my photographs gesture towards emptiness. I am also mindful, that as a direct descendant of Krotoa (Krotoa's daughter Pieternella married Daniel Zaaijman, from whom I am directly descended), I carry within me a kind of genetic archive of her presence. In my journeys to the sites that are, in my mind, marked by her life at the Cape, I am doubly embodied as a descendant.

Subsequent to the journeys, using a process I call 'the archaeologist's camera', I re-photographed the printed photographs, thereby further removing them from representational modes of image-making and especially the documentary function of photography. In the re-photographing process, I am trying to use the camera to find, or at least amplify, the ruins within the image. Of course, there are no physical ruins to capture. Rather, the re-photographing process produces imagery that is analogous to the ruin, with a wholeness in its fragmentary nature and its relation to the passage of time.

Whereas the historians and fiction writers discussed above approached Krotoa's archive as a collection of fragments that could be used to reconstruct her life in an imaginative way, their processes are profoundly informed by the pressures of the present, and thus cannot speak to the loss of the past and the individuality of that loss. My tactic is not to fictionalise the life of Krotoa, but to attempt to embody her absence. Such an approach is also a strategy to call into play the notion that the past, though hardly settled in the contradictory historical and fictional accounts, has lost its presentness when reconstructed. It seems to me that reconstruction from the fragment leads to a conception of the past that is somehow separate from the present. The anarchive, however, allows us to think about more than what was omitted from the archive – it allows us to conceive the presentness of the past, and alerts us to its loss.

All images in this chapter were taken by me as part of my exhibition and creative intervention at the Castle of Good Hope, Cape Town, and from my personal collection – Carine Zaayman