The Invisible Women at the Cape of Good Hope

A STUDY OF THE DAILY LIVES OF CAPE DUTCH WOMEN AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE BETWEEN 1775 AND 1825

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Introduction

This thesis focusses on the daily lives of Cape Dutch[1] women at the Cape of Hope in the period 1775 until 1825. Cape Dutch women, who are the descendants of Dutch-Germanic and Huguenot immigrants to the Cape, have received far less attention in the historical literature than British women at the Cape. British women at the Cape left relative many sources behind, which were often published as well. This meant that those sources were far easier to access for historical research, than sources written by Cape Dutch women. Herman Giliomee goes as far as to state that the gap in the literature was caused by a "lack of diaries, letter & other written records [by Cape Dutch women]."[2] In his article on Cape Dutch women he uses alternative sources, like ego-documents written by men, instead. The article looks at the status of Cape Dutch women in the context of inheritance laws, slavery, and church membership. He emphasises that "[t]his article sketches only the broad picture,"[3] and he encourages more primary research.

This thesis is an answer to that encouragement. My research at the Non-Public Archives (NPA) of the Cape Town Archives Repository[4] (CTAR) has uncovered numerous ego-documents written by Cape Dutch women. This material makes it possible to look at Cape Dutch women from a more personal perspective. As a result, I have chosen to look at Cape Dutch women their daily lives. The focus on daily live places this thesis in the niche of everyday history, which is also known as *Alltagsgeschichte*.[5] Everyday history approaches the individual more closely than many other forms of social history. It has "a concern with the world of the ordinary experiences (as opposed to society in the abstract)."[6] This concern with ordinary experiences is reflected in this thesis' two subtopics, which are; women their daily activities, and women their social relationships. The archival material makes it clear that these topics were important to the women themselves, since they dedicate much of their writing to these topics. It is worth noting that this thesis only uses a limited number of the available ego-documents, showing only the tip of the "ego-document iceberg." This means that there is still a lot of potential in these sources.

[1] These women will be called Cape Dutch throughout this thesis. Other terms which are used in the literature are Afrikaner and Dutch.
[2] Hermann Giliomee, "'Allowed Such a State of Freedom': Women and Gender in the Afrikaner Community Before Enfranchisement in 1930" *New Contree* 59 (2010), 30.
[3] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a state of Freedom'", 30.
[4] The Non-public archives are a collection of archives which have been donated to the CTAR by private individuals, families, or organisations.
[5] I have chosen to only use the term everyday history, as opposed to *Alltagsgeschichte*, to limit confusion.
[6] Andreas Eckert and Adam Jones, "Introduction: Historical Writing about Everyday Life" *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 15.1 (June 2002) 5.

The focus on the daily lives of Cape Dutch women has been inspired by Claire Anderson's biographical approach to colonial history in her book *Subaltern Lives*.[7] While Anderson does not focus on everyday history she does offer a highly personal perspective on colonial history. This approach is marked by a balance between individual stories and their place within society. This balance is also important when looking at everyday history, because it helps to safeguard against "loss of coherence"[8] as a result of an overemphasis on the individual.

In the context of the periodisation of this thesis, this balance between the individual and society is also important. In particular the impact of societal changes on the individual. The period of 1775 until 1825 was a tumultuous period in Cape history. The colony changed hands multiple times as a result of the Revolutionary Wars in Europe. In 1806 the British took full possession of the colony, initiating a period of political change. The secondary literature suggests that these developments also had an impact on the individual inhabitants of the Cape during this period. Danelle van Zyl-Hermann has looked at this impact in her article on the emotional lives of Cape inhabitants between 1798 and 1803. Her conclusion is that these political changes are "mentioned only in passing"[9] in her archival material. This thesis will investigate whether these societal developments had an impact of the daily lives of Cape Dutch women in particular. This will be done through the subtopics of daily activities and social relationships.

The question that will be answered in the three following chapters is: what did the daily lives of Cape Dutch women look like at the Cape of Good Hope between 1775 and 1825, and why was this so?

Everyday history focusses on ordinary experiences, but these experiences only have significance when one understands the broader historical context surrounding these experiences. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction into that historical context. Its emphasis lies on the development of a cultural as well as political community at the Cape of Good Hope. Within these communities Cape Dutch women are afforded somewhat exceptional freedoms, which is made clearer in a comparison with British women who do not have those freedoms. The chapter is chronologically ordered to give an overview of Cape history and the significance of this period. The current historiography of Cape history and women's history at the Cape is introduced here as well. In this historical overview the archival material and their writers are also introduced. In this chapter the writers are given individual attention, while the later chapters emphasis their collective identity as Cape Dutch women. The

[7] Claire Anderson. *Subaltern Lives. Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean Worlds 1790-1920* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[8] Konrad H. Jarausch, "Towards a Social History of Experience: Postmodern Predicaments in Theory and Interdisciplinarity" *Central European History* 22.3-4 (1989) 433.
[9] Danelle Van Zyl-Hermann, "'Gij kent mijn gevoelige hart'. Emotional Life at the Occupied Cape of Good Hope, 1798-1803" *Itinerario* 35.2 (2011) 76.

chapter is divided into two parts to reflect the British take-over in 1806 and show the alleged impact this had on the individuals at the Cape. It is worth noting that two of the ego-documents are not written by Cape Dutch women, but instead by a British woman and man. These documents have been included for their comparative and descriptive value.

In chapter 2 women's daily activities are the central theme. The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the way women spend their time, but also looks into the assumption that women were mostly limited to the private sphere in this era. In order to answer the question whether women were indeed limited to the private sphere this chapter has been roughly divided into two parts; activities around the household and activities outside of the household. In both parts the question is asked why certain activities and roles were or were not linked to women. While this chapter introduces a broad range of daily activities it also offers two important themes in women their lives; food and religion. These topics are mentioned by almost all the women, giving them some universal quality. This chapter uses the archival material found at the CTAR, but supplements this material with published archival material by Karel Schoeman and Antonia Malan.

The third chapter focusses on the social relationships Cape Dutch women have. The literature on relationships at the Cape of Good Hope is limited, making this chapter rely heavily on the archival material. Social relationships are a recurring theme in the archival material, showing the urgency to look at this theme in the context of everyday history. This chapter gives an overview of the relationships Cape Dutch women had and how they valued their relationships. It shows that there is a certain hierarchy in the importance of relationships, with at the apex their relationship with husband and children. The dominance of these relationships seems typical for this era, but other relationships are also presented to show that women were not limited to these core relationships. This chapter pays attention to the common elements between women's relationships but also shows that there is diversity in the character and development of relationships. Central to this chapter is the question why certain relationships are more important than others and how this can be seen in the archival material

All of these questions will come together in the conclusion, where the overarching picture of Cape Dutch women their daily lives is presented. There, the most important question will be why their daily lives looked the way it did.

Chapter 1 – The development of the colony

To understand the significance of everyday history one also needs to know the historical landscape in which it is positioned. For the daily lives of women at the Cape of Good Hope, this means that there needs to be an understanding of Cape society. This chapter serves as an introduction into that society. The emphasis will lie on the development of a cultural and political community at the Cape. These developments can be divided into two periods, since the British take-over of the Cape had far-reaching consequences for the Cape government. This chapter will use this division to show what the current ideas in the historical literature are on topics like marriage, inheritance, and Anglicisation in the Cape of Good Hope. In this context the archival material from the CTAR will also be introduced. Each of the sources and their writers will be introduced in their own historical context, to show their significance for this research.

Early history of the Cape of Good Hope

From the establishment of the colony at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 onwards the character of the colony was unusual compared to other colonies. Unlike other colonies, the Cape's purpose was not to produce export goods but to refresh ships on their way to the East. As a result the port of Cape Town flourished into a bustling city surrounded by farmlands. This urban development and its peculiar position within the VOC influenced the development of the colony in the long run as well. These long-term consequences are not often mentioned in handbooks on South African history. Instead those handbooks offer more straight up information about the colony in a certain period. Historians, like Nigel Worden in his *Cape Town Between East and West,* do notice these long-term implications. He links the development of a *Cape Culture* to the intermixing of many cultures at the Cape as well.[10]

The Cape of Good Hope's role as a refreshment station meant that the VOC had to optimise the production of agricultural goods, while also keeping the population to a minimum. As a result most of the population at the Cape consisted of VOC employees, ex-VOC employees, and slaves who worked the fields. Unsurprisingly women were extremely outnumbered by men. In 1690 men outnumbered women 260 against 100.[11] This ratio improved over time, but it remained a problem as

[10] Carolyn Hamilton, et al., eds. *The Cambridge History of South Africa. Volume 1, From Early Times to 1885* (Cambridge, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 7-11.
Nigel Worden (ed.), *Cape Town Between East and West: Social Identities in a Dutch Colonial Town* (Hilversum, The Netherlands: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2012) IX.

[11] This statistics come from: Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners. Biography of a People* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg Publishers Limited, 2003) 37.

the colony matured. Initially, the population was of Dutch and Germanic decent, as the VOC employees largely came from those areas. In 1688 a group of French Huguenot immigrants arrived at the Cape, diversifying the demographic and influencing the cultural developments. While these new groups of immigrants integrated at the Cape of Good Hope, we also see the development of a *Cape Culture* and *Cape Society*. With these terms I will signify the culture and society which developed at the Cape under the VOC rule. It was influenced by the VOC governance and legislation but also by the cultures which immigrants brought with them from Europe. The resulting culture was mostly limited to the Dutch-speaking population at the Cape, who were mostly white. The ego documents used in this thesis are primarily written by women who were a part of this *Cape Society*, making these terms relevant for the rest of this thesis.

The first ego document which can be put forward in the context of *Cape Society* is the travel journal written by the sisters Johanna and Helena Swellengrebel in 1751. These sisters are the oldest daughters of the ex-governor of the Cape of Good Hope, Hendrik Swellengrebel. They write the journal while returning to Holland after their father's twelve-year governorship of the Cape. While the sisters were not born at the Cape, they spend most of their lives at the Cape, since they are 18 and 21 at the time of the journal. In the journal they write about their daily activities on the ship and offer the reader insights into the minds and daily tasks young women of their stature might have. [12]

Another archival document is the diary written by Johanna Duminy-Nöthling in 1797. The diary offers insights into the life of a relatively wealthy Cape Dutch woman. Johanna spends much of her days around the house, but also goes of pleasure drives around the neighbourhood. Her life seems relatively easy, compared to some of the less wealthy or fortunate women. Her diary has also been included in the book *Duminy-dagboeke = Duminy Diaries,* as part of the Van Riebeeck Collection. I have decided to use the original texts from the CTAR instead of the publication, because they were available to me.[13]

When searching for women in the literature on the Cape of Good Hope it becomes clear that much of the literature is marked by a white male bias. This is most clearly visible in the earlier literature,

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The improvement of the male/female ratio can be found in: Robert Ross, *Beyond the Pale: Essays on the History of Colonial South Africa* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1993) 129. Ross mentions the following ratios: 180 against 100 in 1713, and 155 against 100 in 1740.

[12] Journaal van de Dames Swellengrebel – Account of a voyage Cape Town to Texel, Cape Town Archives Repository (CTAR), Non-public records Archives (NPA), inv.no. A673.

[13] Diary by Johanna Margaretha Nöthling , Cape Town Archives Repository (CTAR), Non-public records Archives (NPA), inv.no. A137.
Duminy, François Reinier, et al. ed., *Duminy-dagboeke = Duminy Diaries* Van Riebeeck Society Publications 19 (Kaapstad: Van Riebeeck-Vereniging, 1938).

like Graham Botha's *Social Life in the Cape Colony in the 18th Century*, which was published in 1927.[14] This bias makes many of these historians blind to the existence and important of women (and other overlooked groups) within that history. In later works on South African history we see the struggle to fit women into pre-existing (male) histories. [15] This strategy is sarcastically called "add women and stir"[16] by gender historian Merry Wiesner-Hanks. Modern gender history is based on the axiom that women's history and men's history are different. This idea goes against the concept of universal history, as many of the earlier histories were portrayed. [17] In *Beyond the Pale* Robert Ross shows that women can be included in histories about the Cape when certain topics are approached differently. Ross re-investigates topics like reproduction and inheritance to include the effect they had on women within Cape society. In *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony , 1750-1870* Ross takes his sensitivity for the gender perspective even further. There, Gender roles and what was expected of women receives much attention, making clear that women's freedoms were limited by law as much as culture. Ross's writing does emphasize the importance of family and households though, in the context of women.[18]

In the archival material themes like family and the household are also given much attention. The memoirs left behind by Maria Dorothea De Villiers (married name Blignaut) is an example of such a document. It spans from her early life in the 1780s all the way up to her death in 1856, offering most information about her life as a young mother at the beginning of the 19th century. Mrs. De Villiers is eloquent in her descriptions of her daily life, but also offers the reader insights into her personal thoughts. In the archival material we find another example of family relationships in the Groenewald correspondence archive. The archive includes eleven letters to or from Mr. J. Groenewald or Mrs. L. Groenewald between 1780 and 1806. The couple corresponds with each other, siblings, and friends. The content of the letters offers insights into their marital relationships, but also in their relationships outside of the household. [19] In chapter 3 these letters will be used to illustrate the relationships women had.

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[14] Colin Graham Botha, *Social Life in the Cape Colony in the 18th Century* (Cape Town & Johannesburg: Juta & Co., 1927).

[15] For instance in: Hamilton, *The Cambridge History of South Africa*. Women remain almost absent, except when they speak of the marriage and reproduction.

[16] Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History* (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2001) 1.

[17] Ibid., 1-2, 11, 26.

[18] Robert Ross, *Beyond the Pale.*
Robert Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750-1870: a Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[19] Diaries of Maria Dorothea De Villiers, Cape Town Archives Repository (CTAR), Non-public records Archives (NPA), inv.no. A1005.
Groenewald Letters, Cape Town Archives Repository (CTAR), Non-public records Archives (NPA), inv.no. A2164.

To understand the society in which these Cape Dutch women lived one also needs to see that the Cape was a melting pot of cultures. Cape culture was one of the many cultures, but did not exist in a vacuum. Nigel Worden's volume *Cape Town Between East and West* offers insights into the diversity which was present at the Cape. It goes beyond the society of white immigrants to the Cape by including chapters on Chinese exiles, South East Asian migrants and the population of freed slaves. The volume also includes several articles on European immigrants to the Cape written by Robert Ross, Alicia Schrikker, Nigel Penn and Nigel Worden. [20] While none of these chapters focus on women in particular they do offer valuable information on the immigrant women at the Cape. The volume *Contingent Lives*, which was also edited by Nigel Worden, includes even more information about women in the colonial context. While this volume does not focus on the Cape of Good Hope it does offer insights into kinship and identity[21], female entrepreneurship[22], and VOC sumptuary legislation[23] throughout the VOC world.

The secondary literature has much to say about Cape society, but often finds its foundation in VOC archives and other governmental documentation. In contrast, Karel Schoeman's publication *Die Suidhoek van Afrika* is based on more personal archival material. It is filled with anecdotal information of the Cape's society and it's populations, making it very useful when looking at everyday history. Schoeman's chapter on the Cape between 1662 and 1797 includes fragments of ego documents, also written by women. *Die Suidhoek van Afrika* will be used side-by-side with the other archival material, since it offers insights where the other material remains silent. [24]

Another publication which engages the primary source material is Danelle van Zyl-Hermann's article on emotional life at the occupied Cape of Good Hope between 1798 and 1803. In this article Van Zyl-

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[20] Worden, *Cape Town Between East and West*.
Robert Ross and Alicia Schrikker, "The VOC Official Elite" *Cape Town Between East and West. Social Identities in a Dutch Colonial Town* (Hilversum, The Netherlands: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2012) 26-44.
Nigel Penn, "Soldiers and Cape Town Society" *Cape Town Between East and West. Social Identities in a Dutch Colonial Town*, ed. Nigel Worden (Hilversum, The Netherlands: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2012) 176-193.
Nigel Worden, "Public Brawling, Masculinity and Honour" *Cape Town Between East and West. Social Identities in a Dutch Colonial Town*, ed. Nigel Worden (Hilversum, The Netherlands: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2012), 194-211.
[21] Laura J. Mitchell, "Belonging: Kinship and Identity at the Cape of Good Hope 1652-1795" *Contingent Lives: Social Identity and Material Culture in the VOC World,* ed. Nigel Worden (Rondebosch: University of Cape Town, 2007) 247-265.
[22] Gerald Groenewald, "A Cape Bourgeoisie? Alcohol, Entrepeneurs & the Evolution of an Urban Free-burgher Society in VOC Cape Town" *Contingent Lives: Social Identity and Material Culture in the VOC World*, ed. Nigel Worden (Rondebosch: University of Cape Town, 2007) 278-293.
[23] Robert Ross, "Sumptuary Laws in Europe, The Netherlands and the Dutch Colonies" *Contingent Lives: Social Identity and Material Culture in the VOC World*, ed. Nigel Worden (Rondebosch: University of Cape Town, 2007), 382-389.
[24] Karel Schoeman, *Die Suidhoek van Afrika: Geskrifte oor Suid-Afrika uit de Nederlandse Tyd, 1652-1806* (Pretoria, SA: Protea, 2002).

Hermann uses the Prize Collection's Cape Letters[25] to uncover the emotional experiences of Cape inhabitants. She points out that "recognising emotions as historical variables has a far-ranging impact on how historians view the past."[26] This impact is very clearly visible when including emotions in everyday history. Researching everyday experiences is not possible without noticing the emotions that are involved in those experiences. This will be reflected in chapter 3, where the character of relationships will be investigated. Van Zyl-Hermann's article also offers information on relationships and the underlying emotions during this period. Making it a valuable addition to the archival research as well as the secondary literature.

The history of the Cape Colony

In 1806 the colony at the Cape of Good Hope is taken over by the British after more than a decade of political tumolt. This invasion was the end of Dutch rule over the colony at the Cape of Good Hope, which was renamed the Cape Colony under the British regime. The take-over by the British meant that the inhabitants of the Cape were joined by new British immigrants. In contrast to the earlier VOC governance the British governance of the Cape encouraged immigration to the Cape. After the start of this policy, an increase in British immigrants can be seen. These immigrants were settled in the newly conquered border areas of the colony.[27]

Amongst the new British immigrants, we find Mr. Hastings, whose diary chronicles his immigration from London to the Cape Colony in 1819-1820. The journal describes of his decision to immigrate, his journey by ship to the Cape, and the first period of his settlement in the Zuurveld area.[28] While Mr. Hastings is not a Cape Dutch woman, he does offer much information on the topic of settlement. Also, he does encounter women and can provide a British perspective on the Cape and its inhabitants.[29] In the secondary literature, we find multiple examples of accounts by foreign travellers to the Cape. These accounts often offer refreshing perspectives on society because they include the ordinary parts of everyday life. One such outsider is Lady Ann Barnard, who accompanied her husband to the Cape between 1797 and 1802. Her diary offers many insights into her life as British elite at a developing Cape, but also describes encounters with Cape Dutch culture and habits. [30]

[25] This collection is also known as "The Sailing Letters".
[26] Van Zyl-Hermann, "'Gij kent mijn gevoelige hart'", 65.
[27] Robert Ross. *A Concise History of South Africa* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 35. Hamilton, *The Cambridge History of South Africa*, 269-271.
[28] North-East of the current city of Port Elizabeth.
[29] Journal of an 1820-settler, Cape Town Archives Repository (CTAR), Non-public records Archives (NPA), inv.no. A338.
[30] Lady Anne Barnard, Margaret Lenta (ed.) and Basil A. Le Cordeur (ed.), *The Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard 1799-1800 vol. 1 & 2* (Cape Town: Van Riebeeck Society, 1999).
Margaret Lenta, "Degrees of Freedom: Lady Anne Barnard's Cape Diaries" *English in Africa* 19.2 (1992) 55-68.

Wealthy British immigrants, like Lady Ann Barnard, were likely to settle in the urban areas of the Cape, where they became a new British part of high society. Most immigrants from Great Britain saw Cape society as backwards and uncivilized. As a result, Cape society and British society remained separate. Anti-Cape sentiments strengthened British nationalism and, in turn, encouraged the development of Cape nationalism amongst the Cape Dutch population. While the government tried to unite everyone under Britishness, segregation between Cape Dutch people and the British grew. On a governmental level, Anglicisation was reflected in the policies that started in the 1820s. Language reforms in schools and courts prohibited the use of Dutch as their main language. Even Dutch Protestant churches were forced to use English as their main language, enraging many Cape Dutch inhabitants. An example of friction between the British and Cape Dutch population can be found in Mr. Hastings' journal. Upon visiting a village to trade he and his British companion are told that English settlers have to pay for everything in cash, as opposed to Dutchmen who were granted credit. Hastings says that this greatly insulted him and his companions. This friction is not presented in any of the other archival material though, supporting the idea that they mostly lived segregated.[31]

An example of a British woman who lived segregated from the Cape Dutch population is Mrs. Maclear, whose correspondence is part of the Maclear-Mann Collection. This extensive archive, which has been investigated only on a limited scale, includes hundreds of letters to and from Lady Mary Maclear (born Pearse). She married the astronomer Thomas Maclear in 1825 and moved to the Cape in 1833 after his appointed as Her Majesty's Astronomer. While her correspondence at the Cape is slightly later than the main research period it offers insights into the lives of the new British elite at the Cape. Her segregation from the Cape Dutch population is most clearly reflected in the fact that all her correspondence is in English. This suggests that her social interactions were limited to people who spoke English, which not all Cape Dutch could.[32]

On the other side of the segregations, we find the correspondence archive of Mrs. E.J. Hugo, who is called Mother Hugo ("Moeder Hugo") in the material. Her correspondence archive is part of the larger Van der Merwe-Worcester Collection and spans from 1820 until 1859. Her letters are mostly written to her children, aunts, and cousins. In her earliest letters she seems to be in her early twenties, talking about the birth of her first children. Similarly to Mrs. Maclear, Mother Hugo's also

[31] Anecdote from: CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 33.
Ross, *Status and Respectability,* 40-43, 55-56.
[32] Correspondence of Lady Maclear, Cape Town Archives Repository (CTAR), Non-public records Archives (NPA), inv.no. A515.7.

reflects segregation, since they are all written in Dutch. She also seems to live rather rurally, reflecting the extending borders of the colony under the British rule. [33]

While most changes at the Cape under British rule were aimed at Anglicising the Cape Dutch population, the changes in the legal system did the opposite. To appease the local Dutch population, the new British government decided to introduce a dichotomous legal system. Under this system, the Cape Dutch population was judged by the Dutch-Roman Law while the British population was judged under the British laws. Dutch-Roman law had been present at the Cape since the first Dutch settlers arrived in the 1650s, which means it was engrained in the Cape Dutch culture as well. The implications of this decision for a dichotomous legal system can most clearly be seen in the inheritance laws, which had influenced Cape Dutch culture and society from the beginning of the colony. Dutch-Roman law practiced partible inheritance, leaving the surviving spouse 50% of the inheritance after which the other 50% would be divided amongst the children. Under the British legal system, which practiced primogeniture inheritance, all the inheritance would go to his eldest son when the patriarch died. While this system protected against the endless division of property (including lands and businesses), it also put British women at a disadvantage. Through marriage, British women gave up all personal property leaving them penniless in case their husband had died before they did. For Cape Dutch women this advantage strengthened their position drastically. Since women often outlived men in this colonial setting, a widowarchy of rich widows with personal wealth and rank was created. However, as Hermann Giliomee correctly states, one should not over-exaggerate the position of women in Cape society. They were, just like under the British legal system, treated as legal minors once married. Being just as much at the mercy of a husband as British women were. [34]

The women writing the ego-documents do not give us insights into this dichotomous legal system, but the Estate Papers of Geesina W. Cloete, widow of Jacob van Reenen, do give us some idea what the system was like. While these papers limit themselves to the Dutch-Roman side of the law, they also show what it is like to be a woman in the legal system. The archive stretches from 1807 until 1834, and also include legal papers of her late husband. The papers do not tell us about any children the couple might have had, suggesting that the whole inheritance went to Geesina. It is noteworthy

[33] Letters written by Mrs. E.J. Hugo, 1820-1859, Cape Town Archives Repository (CTAR), Non-public records Archives (NPA), inv.no. A454.
[34] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a state of Freedom'", 31-33.

though that this inheritance also included a significant debt her husband had, showing the downside of inheritance as well. [35]

Conclusion

In this chapter an overview of the history of the Cape of Good Hope has been given. This history is marked by its exceptional position as a refreshment station, as opposed to a profitable colony. The literature on this period in history emphasises that this position influenced the development of Cape culture. Within this Cape culture women have quite an exceptional position. Since they were outnumbered by men their position as marriage partners was strong. This strong position was enhanced by the favourable legal climate, which allowed women to sign contracts but also meant that they received spousal inheritance. Over time this meant that a widowarchy of financial independent widow (who often remarried) developed.

In 1806, when the British took over the colony at the Cape of Good Hope, Cape culture became even more pronounced. The surprising choice to instate a dichotomous legal system meant that the exceptional position of the Cape Dutch women became even more visible, in comparison which their British counterparts. British immigration to the Cape and the new government's goal to Anglicise the colony meant that Cape culture also turned into nationalism. In this new colony the secondary literature sees much potential for friction between the Cape Dutch and British population.

This chapter also introduces the archival sources from the CTAR. They are placed in their historical context and their significance in the larger perspective is made clear.

[35] Estate Papers of Jacob van Reenen and his widow Geesina Wilhelmina Cloete, Cape Town Archives Repository (CTAR), Non-public records Archives (NPA), inv.no. A573.4.

Chapter 2 – Daily activities

This chapter looks at Cape Dutch women their daily activities. Daily activities are part of the "ordinary experiences" everyday history looks at. While they can be labelled as "ordinary" some contemporary accounts show that these Cape Dutch women were also seen as extraordinary. For instance, O.F. Mentzel mentions being shocked that the women "looked everybody in the eye … and were unabashed."[36] Other visitors to the Cape also mention how forward and business-like the women at the Cape were. In the historical literature we find a very different representation of Cape Dutch women. Instead women are limited to the private sphere and the public sphere is labelled as "exclusively male".[37] This seemingly archaic division between a female private sphere and a male public sphere still seems to persist in the historical literature.

One of the main questions in this chapter is whether women were really limited to the private sphere. In order to answer this question women their activities in both the private and public sphere with the investigated. For both these spheres it is important to know what women their roles were and why women had those roles. The chapter will first introduce two important themes in almost all the women their lives. These themes are important in understanding women their roles but will also be important in chapter 3, where women their relationships will be looked at. This chapter uses the archival material found at the CTAR, but supplements this material with published archival material by Karel Schoeman and Antonia Malan.

Important topics

When looking at women their daily lives two important themes present themselves. These themes are food and religious. The first theme clearly has influences the routines in women's daily lives while the latter effects the way some women experience their daily lives.

The importance of food

The archival material shows that the food and sustenance are important themes in the lives of the inhabitants of the Cape. The women mention food and sustenance often and go into exceptional detail when describing meals and food. In some of the diaries, the day is separated into segments by the meals in morning, afternoon, and evening meals. The meals are often shared with all family members, and thereby have a social as well as a nutritional role. This social role counts within the

[36] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 37. Description of the German travellers O.F. Mentzel who visited the Cape in the 1730s.

[37] Ross, Status and Respectability, 15. The full sentence is; "Perhaps because the public world of the Cape was so exclusively male, the distinction of rank were stressed particularly by the elite women of the colony." Ross says this in the context of elite culture and the role women played in it.

family, but also towards outsiders. It is customary for Cape Dutch families to offer visitors to take part in the family meal. In the women their ego documents this is not a noteworthy activity. How exceptional it is becomes clear the British immigrant Mr. Hastings' description, however. His description is two-fold. Before leaving for the Cape, he hears rumours from other travellers about the exceptional riches and hospitality of the Cape Dutch Boars.[38] At this point, he is still sceptical about these descriptions. This scepticism turns around a couple of weeks after his arrival when he and another British immigrant go to a Cape Dutch farmer to trade. Before they trade they are invited by the farmer to join the family meal. The British men gladly accept and eat heartily. At the end of the meal the exceptionality of the situation unfolds, since Mr. Hastings expects to have to pay for his meal. When this is not the case, Mr. Hastings expresses shame about having eating so much of their food.[39] This example clearly shows that food was used to cement social relationships, even with strangers. Entertaining neighbour and unexpected visitors with a good meal also seems like a way to show one's status and wealth. This can be illustrated by the unexpected visit of the Landdrost[40] and his family to the Duminy family. Johanna states that she had a "good table of food prepared" and let "poultry be slaughtered for the next day."[41] She even has beds made ready for her visitors. All these preparations come to a finale by saying that she and her guests "spend the evening laughing and talking."[42] Since her husband is absent during this visit, this example also shows the independence with which Johanna runs the household, even when she has unexpected visitors.

Women were clearly the ones in charge of the food around the house. For many of the women this meant that they instructed their servants to do something in the garden, to slaughter animals for the meal, to clean the house or make the beds. As Giliomee points out "By 1770 approximately 70% of the burghers in Cape Town and of the farmers in Stellenbosch owned at least one slave."[43] These statistics are reflected in the wealthier women, who often speak of their maids and servants (who are almost certainly slaves). The presence of slaves in the household is not universal. Mother Hugo, who lives more rurally and who is less wealthy than many of the other women, does not mention having slaves or servants to help her around the house. Instead, she seems quite busy with the production and preparation of food. Her garden and the plants in it are often mentioned in her

[38] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 4.
[39] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 30.
[40] The Landdrost was the local delegation of the VOC government. The British equivalent of this office was the steward or reeve.
[41] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 74. Original text: "Liet een goede tavel eete maaken."
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 74. Original text: "Liet ook pluymvee slagte voor die anderdag, …"
[42] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 74. Original text: "Wij brogt die avont door met lagen en praaten."
[43] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 46.

correspondence with her friends and children. In her correspondence there are often requests for specific seeds or plants for their garden.[44]

The preparation of meals is also a recurring topic. This is less so for the very wealthy women, like the Swellengrebel sisters. Their meals seem to magically appear at the table without mentioning any servants or preparation process.[45] The involvement in the preparation of the food increases with the stagnation of wealth. Johanna Duminy-Nöthling, who still seems like a rather wealthy woman, mostly speaks of the instructions she gives her servants. Only on special occasions does she involve herself more than that. Such an occasion can be found in the 12th birthday of one of her sons when two fruit tarts were prepared. The description of the preparation of the meals leaves it unclear whether she was involved in the actual preparation of the tarts. She says; "I went and had chickens slaughtered[,] and made a table [full] of food and 2 fruit tartes." [46]

The extreme detail some women use to describe their daily meals emphasises the importance of food in their lives. This is most clearly reflected in the journal of the Swellengrebel sisters. They describe every single kind of meat, vegetable, sauce and fruit which is presented to them during meals.[47] For these two women, the lack of other interesting things to write about on the ship might help to explain their obsession with food.

Food was a big preoccupation for most people in this era, whether they lived in the colonies or elsewhere. This preoccupation was part of survival but might also have become part of cultural. Many of the rural families at the Cape had to rely on their own production for their survival. One ruined harvest can mean the ruin of a family or community, as Mr. Hastings shows by describing their dying crops.[48] Mr. Hasting also shows the Cape's wealth in natural resources. He is gifted a living goat for the delivery of a message from Britain to the Cape.[49] A gift that both shocks and delights him. The other ego documents confirm this idea of relative natural wealth since most of the

[44] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 23-12-1840, from: Moeder Hugo, to: Kristie. Original text: "wortelplante." CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 11-04-1819, from: Tante A.J. Van der Merwe, to: Nigt C. Hugo. Original text: "slaai saad."
[45] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A673, date: 19-03-1751. An example of miraculously appearing meals: "… this afternoon we had at the table …". Original text: "… wij hadde deeze middag op tafel, karrij, stokvis met aardappelen en patattas, varkens kop, varkens haasie, fricandelle van kalfs vlees, kool gestooft …"
[46] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 46. Original text: "ik gong en liet hounders slagte en makte een tavel eeten en 2 schootels convijt tartes."
[47] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A673, date: 11-03-1751. Example of a description of food is: "vegetable soup, sauerkraut with smoked sausage, and bacon, roasted pork rib, braised mutton, minced beef in tripe with apples, Spanish salsify, and grain-peas". Original text: "soup van groentes, suurkool met herookte worst, en spek, varkens rib op roosten, schaapenvlees gesmoort, rolpens met appele, schorseneele, en graan erten".
[48] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 36.
[49] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 11-14.

families own animals for slaughter, milk, or eggs. Some families, like the Duminy family, have made it their business to breed and trade cattle.[50]

The importance of religion

The second theme which is of great importance to most of the women is religion. Two sides of religion present itself in the archival material. The personal religious experiences and thoughts women have about religion, but also the activities which are associated with religion. The amount of personal experience and inner thought a writer puts down on paper does not seem to be related to the medium they use, rather this seems the result of their personalities.

One might expect journals, diaries, and memoirs to give a more personal account of the writer's life, but this is only the case if the writer is open about those inner feelings. An example of a more distant account can be found in the co-written journal by the sisters Swellengrebel, which tells the reader nothing about the inner workings of the two women. On the other hand, one might expect correspondence to be more limited by writing etiquettes and formalities. This is the case for Mrs. Maclear's extensive correspondences in which she only rarely actually speaks of her personal life. Mother Hugo shows the reader the exact opposite. Her correspondence reads like a fragmented journal, offering many very personal insights into her life. This diversity in writing style is also reflected in how much is written by the women about their religious experiences and life. Some women experience their whole world through religion while others rarely mention religion.

In the literature religion is presented as an important binding factor in the Cape Dutch community in this period. While church attendance in the early colony was very low that changed with the increase of women's attendance. After this, men's attendance also increased because churches became a respectable place to find marital partners. Over the generations the Cape Dutch became known as a very Christian people. One of the ways in which the Cape Dutch showed their Christianity was the lengthy journeys they had to undertake to take part in certain Christian rituals like baptism and marriage. It is also noteworthy that families who lived very rurally had their own consecrated burial plots. Many of these small burial places are still visible in South Africa today.[51]

The literature on religion in the Cape Colony is often based on research in in church archives and the statistical information that can be deduced from its baptism, marriage, and other records. A more personal side of religion has not been looked at very often, because of a seeming lack of sources on

[50] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 17-18.
[51] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 43.
Ross, Status and Respectability, 27.

such a topic. The ego documents used in this thesis offer an opportunity to re-investigate religion in the Cape from a different perspective.

While the archival material can offer different perspective on religion in the Cape it can also explain where some pre-existing notions come from. The idea that the Cape Dutch community was very religious, for instance. This idea is confirmed by a rumour Mr. Hastings hears from a traveller before his departure to the Cape: "These Dutch people I find, said Bob. Are very religious, for as soon as the work is done the whole family have prayers, and the same in the morning before daylight."[52] This anecdote shows that visitors to the Cape had the same idea about religion in the Cape as the historical literature.

The rest of the ego document give a more diverse image of religious ideas and intensity amongst the Cape Dutch people. A whole spectrum of religious experiences is present. On one side of that spectrum, we find the diary of Maria Dorothea De Villiers, whose religious life confirms the rumours and the literature. Maria is a God-fearing Christian, who seems somewhat extreme in her religious ideas. Not only does she claim to have had a vision of the Lord herself, but she also sees all the hardship in her life as a punishment from God for her sins. Everything in her life is about her religion. Finding a good Christian husband, living a godly life, having good Christian children. In the memoirs, she suggests that she would have become a nun if she had not found a suitable husband. Her ideas about Christianity were shaped by all the hardship throughout her life. She has a very punishing God perspective compared to the other women.[53]

Another woman who is also quite vocal about her religious convictions is Mother Hugo. She is not as extreme as Mrs. De Villiers, but does experiences much of the world through her Christianity. Her religious experience of hardship is quite different from Mrs. Villiers. Both women lose children, but Mother Hugo finds support in her religion, rather than seeing the hardship as a personal punishment from God. She expresses the pain over her loss quite emotionally but also tells her correspondents that the Lord has taken her children to a better place. This difference in religious experience can be caused by many things, but the presence of supporting family members (like other children) might have something to do with it.[54]

[52] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 30.
[53] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 3-4.
[54] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 26-10-1821, from: Vader en Moeder [Hugo], to: Kinders.
In this letter they convey the news that their daughter passed away to their children. They had asked her whether "she wanted to go to Jesus" ("sij na Jesús gaan wil"). And after her death that they "solemnly trust [her] into the arms of the Childrens' friend Jesús" ("wij vertroúwe salig in de arme van den kinder vrient Jesús").

The other (less religious) side of the spectrum is taken in by the women who almost never mention religion. Whether this means that they are less religious is not certain, since religion might just be too mundane to mention. An example of a less religious woman is Johanna Duminy-Nöthling. The relative absence of religion in her diary suggests that she if less religious than the two women on the other side of the spectrum. While she starts every daily entry with the words "by God's goodness we all rose healthy this morning"[55] this expression of Christianity seems etiquette and habit. Other women also use similar sentences in their journals and letters, suggesting that it might have been a writing etiquette without much meaning attached to it. In the whole of the diary, which spans a month, she does not mention anything else about her religious life or that of her family. Since she is very descriptive about her daily activities, it is unlikely that she would have left major religious activities, like attending church or a sermon, out. It is possible that religious rituals, like praying before meals, were left out because of their repetitiveness.

On the topic of religion in the Cape we see a difference between the archival material and the secondary literature. The secondary literature seems to be unaware of the diversity in religious life which is presented in the archival material used in this thesis. The church archives, which lie at the foundation of much of the secondary literature, help to paint a uniform image of the Cape as a very religious community. This image would be improved by an awareness of the diversity which is also present.

The private sphere

In looking at women their daily activities this chapter encounter the idea that those women were limited to the private sphere. While this assumption seem archaic, Marijke du Toit also notices this division in the literature. In her article she questions the dominant historical opinion that "Dutch-Afrikaans women of the nineteenth century were absent from the public sphere."[56] This chapter will also explore the merit of this statement by looking at women's activities in the private and public sphere. In the private sphere, which limits itself to the home, women mostly act as carers for the – what we would now call – nuclear and extended family. Outside of the home women had a very different set of responsibilities and activities, often related to work. To understand the division between public and private sphere we will first look at the concept of "the household" and what

[55] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, date: 01-12-1797. Original text:"stont wij alle door godts gouthijt gesont op".
[56] Marijke du Toit, "'Moedermeesteres' Dutch-Afrikaans Women's Entry into the Public Sphere in the Cape Colony, 1860-1896" *Deep Histories: Gender and Colonialism in Southern* Africa, ed. Wendy Woodward, et al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002) 165. Du Toit refers to Marie-Lou Kruger in her footnotes when mentioning this opinion.

women their position was within it. After that women's activities within the household and outside the household will looked at more thoroughly.

The household

In the colonial context "the household" not only includes the family but also servants and slave, who were seen as patriarchal dependents. It was common for family member outside of the nuclear family to join the household. An example of this can be seen in Mrs. De Villiers' household upon marrying her husband. The newlywed couple moved in with her widowed father-in-law, who was almost blind and needed caretaking. The household would later also include her children and visiting family members.[57]

While the concept of "the household" is useful as a research tool it is not a concept that the women themselves use. The Dutch translations of the concept can range from "het huishouden", "de huishouding", "het gezin" (the nuclear family), to "de familie" (the family). But none of these are clearly mentioned in the material. Instead we see references to the house and land ("plaats") as the limits of the private sphere. This often means that slaves working around the house are also included in "the household". In this context it is important to note that slaves were not included in "the family". This is most clearly reflected in the use of given names for family members, while slave are only called "boy", "girl" or "maid".

Now that it is clear where the limits of the household are it is important to look at the role and responsibilities women had within the household. One example of such responsibilities can be found in their preoccupation with food, which shows that it was their responsibility to feed the family. Another responsibility within the household was the overseeing the household slaves. Apart from the household servants most families also had separate servants to help the man of the family with his work. Those slaves were not under the woman's supervision.

In the context of household responsibilities money is also an important topic. While money is almost never mentioned by women it does seem like they are responsible for purchasing most of the household goods. Johanna Duminy-Nöthling, who often travels with her husband to the cattle market does mention some trade and money, but even she is quiet about her own money (if she has any). Their failure to mention money can stem from mundaneness of the topic, but Mr. Hasting's journal offers an alternative explanation. In his journal he mentions the possibility of buying things

[57] Cynthia A. Kierner, "Women, Gender, Families, and the Households in the Southern Colonies" *The Journal of Southern History* 73.3 (2007) 647.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 4.

on "credit."[58] A system using "credit" would explain how women were able to purchase goods without handling money.

Mr. Hastings also mentions the concept of household money in his account of his parental household back in Britain. Before leaving for the Cape he mentions that he gives his day's wages to his mother to purchase groceries. He also mentions his father has to ask his mother for money to go out "for a pint of beer and a pipe."[59] It is likely that this household dynamic was not exceptional in Britain, and that many of the immigrants took these habits with them. For the Cape Dutch community it is unclear whether women also handled the household money.

In the context of the household it is important to note that the women in the CTAR material also stepped out of the household on occasion. These occasions are most frequent in the women who are more affluent, since they have leisure activities outside of the household. In Johanna Duminy-Nöthling's diary many examples can be found of such leisure activities.[60] She often speaks of going on drives around the neighbourhood to visit neighbours.

Women in the private sphere

Within the household women have often been depicted in their stereotypical role as carers. This depiction is related to the idea that the labels "woman," "mother," and "wife" were almost synonymous in this period. To be one was to be or become the other. Below the role of women will be looked at with the help on the secondary literature, but also the archival material. What was their role according to the women themselves? And does that role overlap with the what is put forward in the secondary literature?

In the secondary literature tell a story about the female populations of the Cape of Good Hope. These statistics show that almost all women married and remarried if they were widowed. Once they were married they were expected to start reproducing. Robert Ross aptly describes this in one straightforward sentence; "Once women had entered the breeding stock they usually started their families promptly."[61] The statistics that supporting this statement are based on baptismal records. They show that it was common for women to have more than seven children. However, these records (and the statistics) do not take into account the high infant mortality directly after birth since those children would not have been baptised. This inconsistency suggests that birth rates were even higher than is shown in the statistics. In urban areas of the Cape the use of wet-nurses to

[58] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 33.
[59] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 1.
[60] An example of such a leisure drive can be found in: CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 43-44.
[61] Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 132.

breastfeed their newborns also shortened the period between pregnancies significantly, since their ovulation would return more quickly after they stopped breastfeeding.[62]

The statistics and the literature sketch an image of who women were supposed to be as mothers. They do not take into account the diversity that was present in women as mothers. The ego documents offer insights into this diversity, which was less about the number of children had and more about the struggles of motherhood. One extreme example of the diversity in motherhood can be found in the absence of motherhood in a famous inhabitant of the Cape, Lady Ann Barnard. She and her husband lived at the Cape between 1797 and 1802. The couple married relatively late, when Lady Barnard was 43 years old. They remained childless. It is unclear whether her age was the reason they remained childless, more so because many Cape women had children well into their forties.[63] In her correspondence and memoirs, she mentions children and her lack of children on multiple occasions. Once, she makes a joking comment about the enormous babies the Cape Dutch women have and that their size is a source of pride for those women. From her writing, it becomes clear that she does not understand this sentiment, and seems to find it rather absurd. On her own lack of children she writes that her husband "has given me leave … to take credit for three or four [children] whenever I find the tide of pity and complacency too strong in an other party."[64] This quote shows that she feels judged by other women for being childless. Childlessness has not received any attention in the literature on the Cape. This topic shows the limit to what church archives can tell us about history, since these childless women remain almost invisible. More research in the archival material, like ego documents, might enhance our understanding and knowledge of such women. The archival material shows that Mrs. Barnard's case is quite exceptional. The other women in the archival material are all married (or are on the road to getting married[65]) and have children. Many of their daily activities are related to caring for their family. These activities are related to caring for physical care, but also caring for education.

When it come to the physical care for family members women find some support in professional doctors. But their support should not be exaggerated since doctors were expensive and often unavailable to women living in more rural areas. Mrs. De Villiers is one of the women who does mention a doctor regularly. Her family is plagued by bad health, which means that much of her time

[62] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 38.
Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 134-135.
[63] Ibid., 132.
[64] Both anecdotes from: Lenta, "Degrees of Freedom", 58.
[65] The Swellengrebel sisters are unmarried. Their high status as daughters of the former governor of the Cape of Good Hope would have prevented them from finding a suitable husband at the Cape. After their return to Holland they would marry though.
Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 27.

is spend on care. Surprisingly, the involvement of a doctor often means that she spends even more time on care. This extra time is related to the treatments recommended by the doctor. An example can be found in the journey to healing springs Mrs. De Villiers undertakes with her sick daughter, which takes them multiple weeks.[66] Another example of doctor's involvement can be found in Mother Hugo's correspondence. She mentions that her husband's leg was badly injured in an accident and that she has to regularly change his bandages. She specifically states that her doctor recommended that she treat the wound with tar.[67]

For many of the women doctors are not involved in their role as carers for sick family members. Instead women rely of the use of home remedies. An example can be found in the treatment Mrs. De Villiers' neighbour recommends for Mrs. De Villiers paralysed daughter. This treatment consists of rubbing her limbs with a mixture of soap and Brandewijn, which miraculously works.[68] Mother Hugo often mentions the use of *huismiddels* (home remedies) in her letters, and even explains that the doctor can only come by very occasionally because of her remote location.[69] In her correspondence Mother Hugo also warns others about the certain diseases, like a the seemingly harmless cough which ended up killing one of her children.[70] This awareness of where sickness comes from is remarkable, since these links are not mentions by the doctors themselves. Mrs. De Villiers also has such awareness when speaking about the thrush which killed two of her babies. While the doctor does not mention that breastfeeding (and infected nipples) are the cause, but she seems to be aware that her breastfeeding is somehow related to the disease.[71] Mrs. De Villiers and Mother Hugo both speak about the physical health of their children a lot, since their health is often bad and some of their children even die. The treatment of illness is not utterly futile though, since some of the children also make miraculous recoveries, even when doctors and parents have given up.[72]

Women as educators

Within the household women also mention education as part of their daily activities. The topic of children's education has received some attention from both Hermann Giliomee and Robert Ross in their literature on Cape history. The first thing that becomes clear is that (at least on paper) there

[66] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 19-20, 21.
[67] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 01-10-1831, from: Moeder Hugo, to: Kinders.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 26-06-1825, from: Moeder Hugo, to: Kinderen.
[68] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 30.
[69] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 07-06-1839, from: Moeder Hugo, to: Kinders.
[70] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 15-12-1829, from: Moeder Hugo, to: Kinderen.
[71] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 24.
[72] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 19.

was a form of common education available for girls and boys[73]. What this basic education entails does not become clear though. Robert Ross supplements this information on education by shining a light on the language politics in schools under the British rule. The Anglicisation of the Cape during the early 19th century also reached the schooling system, in which the English language became the common tongue. For many children and teachers this would cause problems, since many of the Cape Dutch children only spoke Dutch (or "bastard Dutch" [74]). This meant that the teachers had to be bilingual to be able to communicate with all children and teach them as well.[75] The information about these problems suggests that schools did exist at the Cape during this period, but does leave much doubt about the rural reach of those schools.

In the archival material, no evidence can be found to support the image of common schooling at the Cape. None of the women mention sending their children to these schools. This might suggest that many of the women lived too rural to access the. If that is the case, one has to consider most of the Cape Colony would be considered "too rural." It is likely that communities and families took care of the basic education of youngsters themselves in these areas. Evidence that children received some form of education can be deduced from the existence of these sources. These written sources, produced by women who lived largely in rural areas show that they received basic education in reading and writing. Other proof of this can be found in Mrs. De Villiers' memoirs, where she states that she learned to write in her youth.[76] This argument about educated women goes against Hermann Giliomee's claim about the lack of written sources by women. In his article on Afrikaner women he says that this lack of sources was due to low "rates of literacy … and generally extremely low [rates of literacy] for women."[77] This extremely low literacy amongst women is not reflected in the archival material. Giliomee's explanation becomes less compelling when considering that the ego documents used in this thesis are likely the tip of the "female ego-document-iceberg."

The concept of family education is supported by the educational activities the women fill their days with. The sisters Swellengrebel, whose mother has passed away, help their younger brother with his reading and writing on many occasions.[78] The sisters also mention spending time knitting and embroidering, skills they were most likely taught by their mother or a handmaid.[79] Mother Hugo also

[73] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 37.
[74] Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 58. "bastard Dutch" is a term used by Robert Ross to describe the bastardised language that children learned from their slave handmaids.
[75] Ibid., 55-56.
[76] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 2.
[77] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 30.
[78] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A673, date: 9-11 March 1751.
[79] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A673, date: 18 March 1751. "Sister Johanna knitted until 8 o'clock." Original text: "Suster Johanna sat te brijjen tot 8 uuren."

mentions an acquaintance who spends much time "teaching and admonishing" her children.[80] In the correspondence by the British immigrant Mrs. Maclear, we find more examples of educational activities. In correspondence between Mrs. Maclear and an acquaintance, Lady Herschel, who mentions the school room Mrs. Maclear keeps for her children. She praises the quality of the education and says that she sees Mrs. Maclear as an example for herself. Lady Herschel also encourages the education of Mrs. Maclear's daughter, Maggy. She recommends the book "The Queens of England" to her, which her own daughter learnt a lot from.[81] This encouragement of (female) education and reading is also reflected in other correspondence of Mrs. Maclear. In the correspondence between Mrs. Maclear and her uncle Sir George Margrath, they keep mentioning the books he is sending her children, which she and the children seem to appreciate.[82]

Most of the educational activities are not mentioned explicitly in the ego documentation. Instead we can indirectly conclude from the praises and anecdotes related to education that it was part of their daily lives. Apart from the reading and writing skills there are many fields in which women are likely to be their children's teachers. For their daughters this is likely to have been the case with handicrafts as well.

The public sphere

But are the descriptions of women around the household the whole image? To answer that question we will now look at women their activities in the private sphere, which even Robert Ross notes is "exclusively male".[83] Going against this perception of women as limited to the private sphere, women will be looked at as a productive part of society, as workers. The previously used archival material offers relatively little on this topic, since these women are foremost working in the private sphere. Literature and source publications by Nigel Worden, Hermann Giliomee, and Karel Schoeman will be used to fill in these gaps.

Informal employment

It is easy to imagine jobs that would stereotypically be filled by women in the colonial context. One of these professions is prostitution. As a refreshment station for ships sailing east it refreshed sailors

[80] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 23-12-1840, from: Moeder S. Hugo, to: Kristie. Original text: "onderwijze en vermane."
[81] Both anecdotes from: CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A515.73. Date: 18-03-1842. From: Lady Margaret Herschel. To: Mrs. Maclear. Mrs. Maclear's husband works with Mrs. Herschel's husband at *The Observatory*.
[82] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A515.73, date: 1840, from: George Margrath, to: Niece [Mrs. Maclear].
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A515.73, date: 02-06-1841, from: George Margrath, to: Mrs. Maclear.
[83] Ross, Status and Respectability, 15. The full sentence is; "Perhaps because the public world of the Cape was so exclusively male, the distinction of rank were stressed particularly by the elite women of the colony." This in the context of elite culture and the role women played in it.

and ships, by supplying foodstuff and fresh water. An informal means of refreshment can be found in the form of liquor and prostitution. The literature does not offer much information about these pleasure houses since many of them operated illegally. It is, however, likely that prostitutes offered themselves to potential clients in taverns and other (legal or illegal) drinking houses. The limited number of white immigrant women at the Cape does suggest that many of the prostitutes would be coloured or black women. These women are outside of the research demographic but should be mentioned in this context. One of the few things we know for certain about prostitution at the Cape is that there was a "guest house" similar to the "pleasure houses" or "play houses" of Ceylon and Batavia situated in the Company Gardens. However, this "guest house" was for the private use of the Governor himself.[84]

In the grey area between informal and formal employment we find the female midwives. An increasing number of these midwives operated within the realm of formal employment after the opening of a midwifery school in Cape Town in the early 19th century. There was also a far larger group of traditionally educated midwives who operated in the more grey area between formal and informal employment. Most midwives were respected for their knowledge about bringing children into the world, but during the late 18th century their profession was being slandered by professionally trained male doctors and the increasing British elite. Midwives their reputation was even more damaged by the fact that they treated white, slave and indigenous women alike. At the beginning of the 19th century, the establishment of an official school for midwifery damaged the reputation of traditional midwives even more. Through all these changes the traditionally trained midwives did not die out, however. Cape Dutch society kept on using them. It is noteworthy, that many of the (traditionally and professionally trained) midwives worked with male family members who were doctors or surgeons.[85]

Some women also drifted between multiple forms of employment. Often, in these cases women worked on more traditional women's (handi)crafts on the side, like knitting, sewing and other handwork. Some of these women sold their produce as an extra form of income. An example of such a women is Henrietta Claasz Wittebol who ran a tavern and provided lodging but also made clothes.[86] These more traditional forms of labour for women were widespread. The ego document offer many examples of these handcraft activities as well. In the journal of the sisters Swellengrebel knitting and embroidery is mentioned as a regular afternoon activity while they still have enough

[84] Antonia Malan, "The Cultural Landscape" *Cape Town Between East and West. Social Identities in a Dutch Colonial Town*, ed. Nigel Worden (Hilversum, The Netherlands: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2012) 18.
[85] Harriet Deacon, "Midwives and Medical Men in the Cape Colony before 1860" *The Journal of African History* 39.2 (1998) 272-273, 276-278.
[86] Malan, "The Cultural Landscape", 22.

light.[87] Obviously, the sisters did not produce things to be sold, since they were part of a very affluent family. For the sisters it was a leisure activity, something we would now call a hobby. For Mother Hugo, who produces much of the clothes for her children herself, there is some urgency to her work. In one of her letters she also urges her children to send her more cotton for the clothes she is making. She also tells them she is sending them some of her work (*negosie*) in return.[88] One of Mother Hugo's correspondents, Mrs. Van der Merwe, also complains about not having had the time for embroidery lately, but promises to make a cap or cape (*kappe*) for Mother Hugo's daughter.[89] Maria De Villiers shows us a different kind of urgency to her work. Before she gets married, she says "my handicraft which was my [existence/livelihood]."[90] Mrs. De Villiers does not elaborate on this statement, but it suggests that her skill meant a lot to her at the time. In no part of her journal does she mention selling her products, so her skills had probably a source of pride as a young woman. Johanna Duminy-Nöthling speaks about handicrafts from another angle. She never mentions doing any handicrafts, but she does mention her handmaids selling their handicrafts at a market.[91] While these handmaids are slaves, this does show that there was a market for handicraft goods produced by women. This example also shows that it might afford a woman some independence if she sells her products.

It is very likely that basic handicraft skills were taught to girls at a young age by their mothers or handmaids. Not much is written about the early education of girls in this familial context, but it is likely that the European traditions surrounding this education survived. In this tradition women their handicraft skills have always been a way for women to clothe their family, showcase personal achievement and in some cases even make some money.

Formal employment

When looking at the formal employment, women had many options at the Cape of Good Hope. While women were legally barred from some professions, like VOC or government employment, they also had many opportunities. Giliomee shows that these opportunities had much to do with the exceptional legal status Cape Dutch women had compared with their British counterparts. Two of the most striking differences are the fact that Cape Dutch women were allowed to sign contracts, making it possible for them to buy property and start businesses, and that they received spousal

[87] Example can be found in: CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A673, date: 11-03-1751. Original text: "vandaag heb ik zitten brijen."
[88] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 01-07-1821, from: Moeder Hugo, to: *kindere.*
[89] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 02-06-1820, from Mrs. A.J. van der Merwe, to: Nigt C. Hugo.
[90] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 4. Original text: "mijn hantwerk dat mijn bestaan was."
[91] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 16-17.

inheritance in case their husband died.[92] Together, these anomalies in the Dutch Roman legal code gave women opportunity to do things many other women were not able to. By surviving their spouses they gathered wealth, which helped the in becoming successful parts of society in their own right. This development of financially independent women is also called the widowarchy. However, legal independence of Cape Dutch women should not be exaggerated since they were still treated as minors by law and only received burgher status through their spouses.[93] In Cape society, the cultural acceptance of more independence for women had become deep-rooted by the time the British immigrants arrived. This tradition would also played an important role in the later Voortrekkers movement.[94]

The exceptional legal position Cape Dutch women also influenced their opportunities in many fields of employment and self-employment. One of those fields can be found in the taverns, drinking houses and lodges. Nigel Worden was able to find a number of women who ran taverns, drinking houses or lodging facilities. An example of such a deduction from inventory records is Catharina Meijer, who "could have been in the lodging business as there were two bedroom suites in the back portion of the house with separate sets of drinking, smoking, cooking and eating utensils."[95] For some of the women in Worden's research, it is less clear what their exact line of business was. Some women, like Angela of Bengal, owned multiple properties, suggesting that some might have been used for lodging as well.[96] This might also have been the case for Stijtje de Bruijn, who owned a small farm in Schotsekloof while she lived in a different Cape Town property herself. These properties are likely to have come into her possession upon the death of her husband since she was a widow.[97]

Linked to employment in the early hospitality sector is the employment as trader of alcohol to these drinking houses and lodges. The sale and trade of alcoholic beverages were highly regulated by the VOC authorities and later by the Cape Colony government. Annual and bi-annual licenses (*pachten*) were sold to the highest bidders to trade a certain kind of alcohol in a certain area of the colony. These licenses could cost up to 30,000 Guilders and were the single largest form of direct income for the Cape authorities. The trade in alcohol was a male dominated business, but women were also allowed to bid on liquor licenses. In the 1730s 2 out of the 27 licenses were in female hands. A visitor to the Cape notes the importance of trade (and the role women have in it) by saying; "If the father

[92] On spousal inheritance: Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 140.
On the signing of contracts: Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 33.
[93] Ibid., 33.
[94] Ibid., 47.
[95] Malan, "The Cultural Landscape", 19.
[96] Ibid., 18.
[97] Ibid., 19.

does not trade, but carries on some handicraft, his wife, daughter or son must [trade]."[98] This statement was also true for the liquor trade, in which multiple generations within one family often stick to the liquor trade whether they are man or woman. Widows also often continued in the liquor trade after their husband's death, on their own or with a new husband. Two examples of widows who owned liquor licenses were Maria Coster and Josina van Dam.[99]

Within the alcohol trade, just like many other sorts of trade, family ties were of great importance. They not only gave access to the right connections, but also the capital to be able to afford to trade. Men and women often married strategically to enter certain lines of work or rise in status. Youngsters at the Cape were relatively free in socializing with different classes, making it possible for women to connect to men of higher status.[100] An example of marriage politics can be found in the story of Jan van der Swijn, who married a widow who had taken over her late husband's alcohol business. After his first wife died he was able to marry even higher due to the capital he had accumulated.[101] Many examples of social climbers amongst men and women can be found. Women had the advantage of being in the minority, while men (often immigrant men) were able to bring new skills into a family.

Another way women could employ themselves related to the production of crafts and other products is selling goods in shops. The tannery and shoemaking business of Hermina Herwig is a good example of this employment.[102] She ran the business with four consecutive husbands, making it into a successful business. Similar stories can be found in Henrietta Claasz. Wittebol who made clothes, and Maria Kleef who was the wife of a tailor, but participated in the business as well.[103] In the ego documents an example of a female shopkeeper can be found as well. The British immigrant Mr. Hastings wrote in his journal about an encounter he had with a female shopkeeper while visiting a small town. He tells the reader that the shop was kept by a "widow lady." In search of "awls and shoemakers hemp," he enters the shop and starts a conversation with her shopman, who is a shoemaker by trade. When he meets the shopkeeper, he is offered refreshment in the form of some Brandy, which he declines. He is in awe of the gracious treatment he receives from the shopkeeper, whom he keeps referring to as a "lady." He starts a conversation with the shopkeeper, in which it becomes clear that she is well travelled and open about her past hardships. The shopkeeper employs at least one shop man and owns one slave girl, who helps her around the shop. It does not become

[98] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 34.
[99] Groenewald, "A Cape Bourgeoisie?", 280-284.
[100] Ross, Status and Respectability, 16, 27-29.
[101] Malan, "The Cultural Landscape", 21.
[102] Ibid., 20.
[103] Ibid., 22-23.

clear from Mr. Hastings' description whether she is Cape Dutch or British. However, the conversation must have taken place in English, since Mr. Hastings does not speak Dutch.[104] This account by Mr. Hastings of a shop run by a woman is of much importance in the context of the earlier mentioned accounts of women in business. The account offers credibility to the descriptions of women in business made by historians, like Nigel Worden, based on inventory records. Since the use of inventory records leaves room for speculation, making the following descriptions less fool proof.

Mr. Hastings account is not the only personal account which supports the portrayal of working women. On a less positive note, we find an account by the traveller Mr. F. Valentyn. He says that "many of the evil burghers and burgher women milk poor sailors" of all their money and belongings.[105] While less positive, this description also supports the image of the business mindset of many Cape Dutch women (and men). It is likely that in many other places, like Britain, this position of *cut-throat business folk* was reserved for men, making it all the more shocking that women were a part of that same *folk* at the Cape.

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the activities with which women filled their daily lives at the Cape. When searching for these activities it important to note that two themes dominate the lives of many of the women. The first of these themes is food. Women were responsible within the household for the preparation of meals. For some women this meant the actual preparation and for others this meant the overseeing of the preparation by house slaves. Within Cape Culture food was also part of the hospitality culture. This is most clearly described by the foreigner Mr. Hastings, who is in awe of the hospitality which he is afforded as a stranger.

The second theme which is woven into the daily lives of most of the women is religion. Here it is important to note the diversity in the amount of religion women have in their lives. While some women, like Mrs. De Villiers, live their whole life through religion other women, like Johanna Duminy-Nöthling, only rarely mention religion. The literature on religion in the Cape does not show this diversity in religious life. Instead, writers like Hermann Giliomee, emphasize the universal religious conviction in the Cape was based on church records. With a complex topic like religion more attention should be paid to diversity.

[104] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 32-33.
[105] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 34.

Literature on women at the Cape of Good Hope has been marked by the assumption that they were limited to the private sphere. This division of society into a female private sphere and a male public sphere stems from an era in historical writing in which there was no room for women. While the limitation of women to the private sphere is outdated, the division between public and private sphere can be a useful tool.

Within the household women had many different role, which influenced the way they spend their daily lives. The archival material shows us examples of women running the household, managing the household money and overseeing the household slaves. In the context of running the household, men are rarely mentioned. Beyond running the household, women were also the carers within the household. They took care of sick family members, like their husband and children. They also took care of their children's education. In these activities, we see somewhat of a sliding scale in the amount of time spend of household chores. It seems like the more affluent women, like Johanna Duminy-Nöthling, spend less time on these chores than the less affluent women, like Mother Hugo. This difference is a result of the outsourcing of work to slaves and results in more spare time for the women themselves.

While most of the activities in the archival material are linked to the household, activities within the spare time mostly seem to be outside the household. Some women took their role as carers outside the household in their leisure time. For instance, Mrs. Maclear and Mother Hugo cared for the education and health of the poor in their neighbourhood. Mrs. Duminy-Nöthling, who seems to have a lot of leisure time, often accompanied her husband while travelling. She also regularly went on leisure drives around the neighbourhood. These activities do not seem to be born out of necessity, but rather out of charity or convenience.

The secondary literature supplements these daily activities with activities born out of necessity; work. Some women worked around the home, but a group of women also made a living in the public sphere. This employment ranged from prostitution, shopkeeper, and lodgers to alcohol trader.

Within Cape society women were able to rise in status and accumulate personal capital through marriage and remarriage. The dichotomy of the British and Dutch-Roman legal system at the Cape made the unusual position of Cape Dutch women evident. They had relatively many rights and freedoms in comparison with their British (and many other European) counterparts. At the Cape, this meant that British and Cape Dutch women lived in two different worlds while sharing a colony.

On the whole, this chapter has shown that the activities of women at the Cape were not limited to the private sphere. Instead, it shows a broad range of activities around the home, neighbourhood,

and workplace. The overemphasis on the home in the archival material can be a result of using the medium of ego documentation since writing can be seen as a leisure activity as well. This might explain the relatively limited archival material written by or about working women. The secondary literature compensates this by including other sources, like legal documentation.

Chapter 3 - Relationships

Chapter two uses the daily activities of women to explore women's daily lives, but the archival material offers another important building block for daily lives: relationships. The ego documentation is dominated by descriptions of people, social interactions and relationships. Considering that the documents that are being used in this thesis are only the tip of the "ego document iceberg," it is remarkable how much they already tell us about the relationships in women's lives. Few historians have looked at women's relationships in the context of colonial or everyday history. As a result, much of the literature on women in the Cape remains silent on this topic. This chapter will rely heavily on the information from the archival material. That information will be supplemented with archival anecdotes from source publication like Schoeman's *Die Suidhoek van Afrika*.

Since very little has been written about women their relationships the central question in this chapter is what relationships do women have, and why are certain relationships more important. Related to these questions is also whether women can actually influence in which relationships they are, considering the *natural path* society expected them to take.

The chapter is arranged according to the importance given to certain relationships by the women in the archival material. The resulting order begins with the *elementary relationships* which are a part of most women their lives. These are their relationship with their husband and children. Beyond these *elementary relationships* the less important relationships will be looked at. These include their relationship with their parents, siblings, slaves, and non-familial friends.

Relationship with a husband

One of the main relationships in a woman's life was the relationship with her husband. Based on the marriage statistics for the Cape one might even say that; to be a woman is to be a wife. Only a very small number of women remained unmarried, making them almost absent from the statistics. One explanation for this high percentage of married (and remarried) women at the Cape can be found in the skewed male/female ratio. While the ratio became less extreme over time women at the Cape of Good Hope were still outnumbered 144 to 100 by 1755. The high demand for women remained a problem, even when the British started to encourage immigration to the Cape. As a result of the shortage of women, remarriage amongst widowed women was normal.[106]

To understand to what extend the situation surrounding marriage in the Cape was exceptional one can compare the situation to that of North Western Europe. In North Western Europe an unusual

[106] Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 129-132.

marriage pattern had developed from the late Middle Ages onwards. In this pattern couples married far later than in other parts of Europe, waiting till their mid to late twenties in order to be financially independent. Also, around 25% of the population often remained unmarried.[107] Unlike their European cousins Cape Dutch women married earlier and remained dependent on their family. This pattern was born out of the demographic and financial situation at the Cape.

Finding a husband

When it came to choosing suitable marital partners (for both men and women) family connections and status were important factors. Marriage politics were actively used by parents and youngsters to increase their own fortune and status. Young adult women had relatively much freedom to socialise beyond their own social circle. Many of them saw this as an opportunity to rise in status through a good match, as they derived their status from the male head of the household.[108] These social interactions could happen in a number of places depending on status. The wealthier women could socialize during balls, as described in a letter by one of Mrs. Maclear's friends. For less affluent women church was a good place to socialize. As a result of this matchmaking, church attendance increased steadily from the early 18th century onwards. In the ego documents, Mrs. De Villiers is a clear example of a woman searching for a suitable partner through her church. She makes it clear that a potential husband should have the same religious conviction as she does.[109]

Preferences and personal ambitions often went hand in hand when searching for marital partners. Entering certain professions or lines of business required money and connections. The liquor trade is an example of such a line of business. While the trade was open to everyone, it was exceptional for an outsider to become successful in the trade without the right connections. To acquire these connections men (and sometimes women) married into families who were already active in the liquor trade or had the money and connections to start participating the trade.[110] For many women marriage and remarriage were important ways to rise in status and acquire wealth for themselves as well. When it came to status, it was also smart for women to utilise marriage politics in their favour. Their status as burgher[111] and social standing was based on the male head of the household, meaning their father or husband. An example of such a conscious choice of marital partner can be

[107] Wiesner-Hanks, *Gender in History*, 38-39.
[108] Ross, Status and Respectability, 16.
[109] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 43.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A515.73, date: undated, from: Lady F. Nafies, to: Mrs. Maclear.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 4. Original text: "ik heb altoos om gebeede dat ik met een [man] mogte trouwe die den Heere vrees of dat hij mij geen tegenstant moog biede."
[110] Groenewald, "A Cape Bourgeoisie?", 284.
[111] Burgher status was awarded to individuals by the VOC government. Ex-VOC employees were likely to become burghers. Some immigrants received burghers status as well, but this was not the norm.

found in the memoirs by Hester Venter, who married the twenty-one-year-old Hendrik van der Walt at the age of sixteen. She describes her husband quite coldly by saying that he "had a good living because of the inheritance [he received] from both of his parents, who had died."[112]

Courting & wedding

One can imagine that the daily lives of single women (and men) were somewhat dominated by finding a suitable marriage partner. But finding a suitable partner was only the first step towards marriage. Quite some wooing was needed to finalise the relationship, as letters between Catharina du Plessis and Christoph Hendrik Niehuys show. Christoph tries to woo Catharina by writing her long letters with romantic poems. His efforts result in a marriage in the same year.[113] Not all wooing led to a successful ending though, as the lawsuit Maria van Hoeven started against her former fiancé Rudolf Jurgen Abel shows. From the lawsuit it becomes clear that she had lend him large sums of money during their engagement, with the expectation to marry him. Before making good on his promises he left without explanation, leaving her angered and poorer.[114]

In the ego-documents none of the women describe a wedding ceremony. Instead we do find the archival trace of the preparations for a marriage in the form of a request for approval. Mother Hugo (before she was a mother or a wife) sent her aunt and uncle a letter in which she tells them she will ask her mother permission to marry, and asks for their approval as well.[115] Robert Ross does pay some attention to wedding ceremonies in the Cape in his book *Status and Respectability*. His focus lies on the limitations sumptuary laws place on the wedding ceremony. These limitation came in the form of the clothe that were worn by the couple, the length of the meal, and the church services which would finalize the marriage. Ross emphasises that the limits on the pomp of the wedding "did not prevent very considerable festivities."[116]

Character of marital relationships

When we enter the realm of courting and marriage, we also enter the realm of emotions. As Danelle van Zyl-Hermann shows, these emotions are an important part of understanding history. Here they will be used to see what their influence is on the character of marital relationships. This is important because the characters of those marital relationships shapes the daily lives of women.

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[112] Schoeman, *Die Suidhoek van Afrika*, 80. Original text: "… het 'n goeie bestaan gehad dear die erfenis van albei sy ouers, wat oorlede was, …"
[113] Ibid., 73-75. Letter including poem by Christoph Hendrik Niehuys to Catharina du Plessis, date: 24-07-1782. The couple married later in 1782.
[114] Ibid., 70-71. Collection of letters by Maria van Hoeven to Rudolf Jurgen Abel, dated around 1733.
[115] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 29-01-1818, from: Moeder Hugo, to: Uncle and Aunt.
[116] Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 28.

The first emotion and resulting character of relationship to look at is the relationship in which affection or love plays a role. One of the clearest examples of such a relationship can be found in the Groenewald correspondence. The letters between husband, Jacobus Groenewald, and wife, Mrs. L. Groenewald, are clearly loving towards each other. Their affection becomes clear when one compares Mrs. Groenewald letter opening to her husband with her normal letter openings. She affectionately writes to her husband "My dearly beloved" while she normally opens her letters with "Dear". Her affection is even more pronounced in her letter endings where she says to her husband; "So I am with all my tenderness your loving wife"[117]. The archive the Groenewald family has left behind does not show what the influence of this loving relationship was on Mrs. Groenewald's life though. For that influence we turn to the Johanna Duminy-Nöthling's relationship with her husband. Her husband does not play a large role in the household since he is often absent, but she does speak about him other contexts in an affectionate tone of voice. In her diary their relationship is marked by their travels to the cattle pens and markets together. It becomes clear that she is treated with respect by her husband. This is made clear by the freedom she is given to roam the market and choose her own daily activities. During one of their visits to a cattle market she declines a direct request from him for her to go back to their lodgings. This decline does not cause a fuss, suggesting that her respects her wish to stay. She only tells him that she wants "to watch all the fun".[118]

Not all relationships stemmed from mutual affection or love, however. In the archival material we also find multiple examples of relationships born out of practical motivations. These motivations influence the emotions which are involved in the relationship, but also the character of the relationship as a whole. In chapter two Hermiena Herwieg is mentioned as a woman who ran a successful shoemaking shop with four consecutive husbands. Her growing success as a business woman attested to smart choices when it came to potential husbands. It is likely she picked her next husband based on his skills, as well as other characteristics. She must also have grown more independent over the years of business success, something a potential husband would have to accept. Her success as a business woman does not tell us anything about the relationships she might have had with her husbands, however. At the same time, it does prove that her relationship choices were good for business.[119]

In the relationship between Mrs. De Villiers and her husband, we find another practical foundation: religion. As has been mentioned before, Mrs. De Villiers makes it clear in her memoirs that her

[117] Both quotations from; CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A2164, Date: 12-04-1780, from: Mrs. L. Groenewald, to: Monsieur Jacobus Groenewald. Original: "Mijn allerliefste" compared to "geliefde". Original ending to letter*: "so ben ik met alle tederhijd Ue liefhebbende vrou".*
[118] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 18. Original text; "on de pret aan tesien".
[119] Malan, "The Cultural Landscape", 17, 20.

choice in husbands was influenced by her religious ideas and wishes. It seems, that she has found her religious match in Mr. De Villiers, who was also very religious and God fearing. Her memoirs do not sketch an affectionate marriage between Mrs. and Mr. De Villiers. Instead, their common religious zeal is a binding factor, which also supports them in all the hardships in their lives.[120]

Another practical side of relationships between spouses can be found in the ending of the relationship. Separation and divorce were relatively easy at the Cape of Good Hope. While divorce was still quite unusual, separation of bed and board was a rather normal solution to a bad marriage. Unlike many European countries at the time, women as well as men could petition for a separation or divorce. Infidelity and brutal mistreatment were legitimate grounds for women to be granted a divorce at the Cape. For the character of relationships, this most likely meant that women had a stronger position against their husbands in the context of mistreatment and abuse. In this context we find a letter from Alida Swart writing to her husband. In the letter Alida angrily complains about her husband's failings. Within a year of writing the letter she and her husband divorced.[121]

Relationship with children

On the *natural path* women were expected to walk down becoming a mother was the next step after becoming a wife. Motherhood was not so much a choice as an expectation. But what did it mean to be a mother? And how did their relationship with motherhood itself change as their relationship with their children changed? In this context fatherhood also plays an important role. While historian have often looked at parental relationship strictly from the female perspective this is not the whole picture. A more balanced description of parental relationship includes both genders. This means that the analyses of parental relationships will also include some examples of fatherhood.

We will pay attention to the different stages in the relationship a woman (and man) might have with their children. This starts with pregnancy and birth, but will go on as the child is born and grows up. All of these stages are marked by different characteristics, which influence and change those relationships.

[120] "Hardships" is a reference to the ill health of Mrs. De Villiers and her children as well as the death of their children.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 4.
[121] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 33.
Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 132.
Schoeman, *Die Suidhoek van Afrika*, 75-76.

Pregnancy & birth

The relationship between mother and child starts with pregnancy. When looking at the archival material it is striking that this topic is never mentioned. This is even more noticeable when one considers the number of pregnancies women would go through in their lifetime. Demographic research shows that there was a mean interval of 18 months between marriage and the birth of their first child. After their first child women would become pregnant at a mean interval of 26 months well into middle age.[122]

The silence surrounding the topic of pregnancy in the archival material can be explained by the risks surrounding pregnancy and childbirth. Both the woman and her unborn child were at a high risk of dying at any point during the pregnancy or birth.[123] These risks likely led to fear and superstition surrounding pregnancy. Historians have not looked at the experience of pregnant women in the Cape Colony but we do find an example of such research for colonial Virginia. The similarities between these two young colonies makes it worthwhile to include this research. On the topic of the fear surrounding pregnancy and birth the research states that women had a "fear of death and fear of pain that could not be controlled."[124] All these fears and superstitions might have helped to create the taboo surrounding pregnancy, as one might jinx the pregnancy by speaking of it.

To add to this aura of superstition and fear much of the assistance of pregnant women at the Cape was done by traditionally trained midwives. As has been mentioned before, these women were relatively skilled and knowledgeable, but they were also associated with witchcraft and immoral behaviour. These negative connotations were exaggerated even more when male physicians started entering the field during the mid-19th century. Before this medicalisation of childbirth, pregnancy and childbirth were an exclusively female affair, even associated with female bonding.[125]

Babies

After giving birth the silence surrounding parenthood changes into a willingness to speak for many of the women. However, Some women remained unwilling to share their parental lives on paper. For the women who speak about their new-born children, health and death are important topics. Emotions related to these topics have much influence on the relationships women have with their

[122] Note that the interval between marriage and the first birth is based on research done by Cilliers and Fourie, while the mean interval between pregnancies is given by Ross.
Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 132-133.
Jeanne Cilliers and Johan Fourie, "New Estimates of Settler Life Span and other Demographic Trends in South Africa, 1652-1948" *Economics History of Developing Regions* 27.2 (2013) 79.
[123] Ibid., 77.
[124] Nancy Schrom Dye, "History of Childbirth in America" *Women: Sex and Sexuality* 6.1 (1980) 99.
[125] Deacon, "Midwives and Medical Men", 277-278.

children. As a result, the archival material offers an broad range of relationships women have with their babies and children. On the one hand, we find the doting mother who speaks lovingly about her babies in Mother Hugo. This can be seen in the way she speaks of her youngest daughter, Willemiena. In her correspondences, she voices her fears about the child's health, but also shares anecdotal information about the child's life, like her first tooth.[126] Another example of a doting but more frantic mother can be found in Mrs. De Villiers' memoirs. She writes lovingly about her new-born babies, but there is always a fearful undertone in descriptions. Of the eleven children she gives birth to she loses five children at an early age. This obviously feeds her fears. She writes with strikingly much emotion about the loss of these children, even looking back on them with much sadness at the end of her memoirs.We also find this emotional side in Mother Hugo's letters after the death of Willemiena. In a letter 19 years after Williemiena's death Mother Hugo still mentions the ache she feels over that loss.[127]

In contrast to these openly doting and emotional mothers, Johanna Duminy-Nöthling shows us a less involved mother in her writing. She limits most of her descriptions of her children to the collective wellbeing of her "children," without mentioning them individually. One of the few individual descriptions of her children is when she almost forgets her son's birthday. On this topic she says; "Duminy [her husband] congratulated my Vransie [her son] with his birthday. We was 12 years old. I had not thought of his birthday."[128] From secondary research, it becomes clear that the family includes four children, of which the oldest daughter was eighteen. While her lack of writing might not mean anything about her actual participation in their lives, it is striking that the children are mostly absent in an otherwise comprehensive diary.[129]

An explanation for more detached motherhood at the Cape is given to us by contemporary British traveller Robert Semple. In his *Walks and Sketches at the Cape of Good Hope* he states the following about motherhood at the Cape: "The [Afrikaner women] seldomly suckle their children, the most prevailing practice is to consign them over in a manner to a faithful female slave who suckles them,

[126] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 20-06-1820, from: Nigt Hugo, to: Tante Aa. Ja. Van der Merwe. Mother Hugo ends her letter saying: "Willemiena heb al een tantje".
[127] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 38.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 26-10-1821, from: Moeder Hugo and her husband, to: Kinders. Willemiena dies in 1821.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 17-07-1840, from: Moeder Hugo, to: Kinderen. Later letter mentioning Willemiena.
[128] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 46. Original text: "Duminy vilisteerde mijn vransie sijn geboortedagt. hij was 12 jaare ouyt. ik hat sijn verjaardagt niet gedagt."
[129] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 46.
François Reinier Duminy, et al. ed., *Duminy-dagboeke = Duminy Diaries* Van Riebeeck Society Publications 19 (Kaapstad: Van Riebeeck-Vereniging, 1938).

bring them up, and in a word becomes a second mother…"[130] This description of Cape Dutch women is still surrounded by some controversy since historians are not convinced the use of wet-nurses was as widespread as Semple would like his readers to believe. We also have to take into account the obvious disdain he feels towards the Cape Dutch culture and the cultural superiority he feels for his own Britishness. This suggests that Semple might have exaggerated the negative aspects of Cape Dutch culture to please his audience. That audience of British readers, just like the British immigrants, had many preconceptions about the backwardness of Cape Dutch culture.[131] Robert Ross offers an anecdote in support of the idea that handmaids and wet-nurses were involved in raising children at the Cape. He mentions that a "Dutch officer at the Cape noted that they learnt 'bastard Dutch' from their slave nurses, but as adults […] could switch into what was thought of as 'correct' Dutch."[132] This anecdote suggests that handmaids might have been common amongst the Cape gentry, but does not resolve the controversy surrounding Semple's statement on Cape motherhood.

Young children

In the archival material women their relationships with their children are often marked by fear and anxiety about health. As Danelle van Zyl-Hermann points out, these emotions "are rarely expressed in isolation from other emotion, but mostly intertwined with feelings of love, sadness, longing or even reproach."[133] These multifaceted emotions are also present in the archival material. They influence choices women make for their young children, like baptism.

The high mortality amongst newborns put pressure on parents to decide on when to baptise. Without baptism, a child would not be recognised by the church, but many babies were too fragile to travel the long distances to their baptism. Such a struggle to decide can be found in Mrs. De Villiers and her husband, whose baby girl is sick. After some hesitance, they decide to baptise the child, but she dies two weeks later from thrush.[134] Their fears about health and sickness also present us an example of active fatherhood, in Mr. De Villiers. One evening, when one of their children is too sick to make it through the night, Mrs. De Villiers writes "my husband asked her; My child do you want to die[?]"[135] Other times, when their children are sick, he prays together with Mrs. De Villiers and the children for the Lord's support. Mrs. De Villiers also speaks of the sorrow she and her

[130] Robert Semple, *Walks and Sketches at the Cape of Good Hope to which is subjoined a Journey from Cape Town to Blettenberg's Bay.* (C. and R. Baldwin: New Bridge-Street, 1805) 30.
[131] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 38-39.
[132] Ross, Status and Respectability, 58.
[133] Van Zyl-Hermann, "'Gij kent mijn gevoelige hart'", 68.
[134] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 24.
[135] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 5. Original text: "mijn man vroeg haar, mijn kint wil je sterfe [?]"

husband feel over the loss of their children. In this context, she also mentions her father-in-law involvement with his grandchildren. From the ego documentation, it becomes clear that these children, while only being part of a family for a short while, have an influence on the other members of the family.

The insecurity surrounding babies' health also had a strong influence on the relationship which developed between parent and child. This insecurity might make parents hesitant about bonding emotionally with a child. Johanna Duminy-Nöthling's more detached motherhood might be a reflection of such reluctance to bond. From secondary sources, it becomes clear that she lost a child seven years before writing her diary. This daughter is never mentioned in the diary, even though the child was two or three when she died. The traumatic event of her death might have resulted in a more distant approach towards mothering her other children.[136]

In demographic research done by Cilliers and Fourie, we find a less personal reflection of child mortality. According to their research child mortality was highest between the ages of 0 and 5, after which mortality went down gradually until the age of 14. Cilliers and Fourie note that underreporting of child mortality, because the death of unbaptised babies remained mostly unreported, might have skewed the results of their research. This means that the reality of child mortality might be even worse.[137]

Grown-up children

With age, the relationship between parent and child matured as well. Health and sickness became less threatening as mortality stabilized during puberty. From this material we learn that education is an increasingly important topic in the lives of children as they grow older. While the literature presents the idea that both boys and girls receive basic education from the government, parental education has a significant influence on children their future. For sons, this educational role was mostly taken up by their fathers. Such a father role can be found in one of Mother Hugo's letters to her children, in which her husband also gives instructions to their son about the purchase of new cattle as well as other work-related information[138]. Another example of a father role can be found in a diary entry by Johanna Duminy-Nöthling about a social visit in the neighbourhood. During this visit, one of her female acquaintances proudly tells Johanna that her son has started working with her husband.[139] These examples show that sons would often work with their fathers, developing a working relationship as well. Working relationships between father and daughters seem less

[136] Duminy, *Duminy-dagboeke*.
[137] Cilliers and Fourie, "New Estimates", 70, 77.
[138] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 27-07-1825, from: Father and Mother, to: Kindere.
[139] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 59.

common. At the same time, we do find examples in the literature of daughters taking over the liquor trade from their fathers, suggesting that such women would had a working relationship with their fathers.[140]

The abundance of correspondence between parents and their children shows the importance of such a medium in parental relationships. Letters from two British boys to their parents, written while away to boarding school in a different part of the Cape, show us that letters were universally important for parents in this era.[141] Mother Hugo also corresponds extensively with her children, who seem to live in a different part of the Cape. Her repeated requests for more letters show that she is involved in their lives even while living separately.[142]

Mrs. De Villiers memoirs offers another example of a parental relationship: that of her with her parents. At the start of her memoirs she writes of her early life, when she was still living with her parents. She mentions that her parents are open about their disapproval of her extreme religious ideas. This pushes her to find a husband and move out. After she married, she remains in contact with her mother, for whom she calls for in time of need. As the memoirs progress, Mrs. De Villiers becomes a parent herself, developing a relationship with her own children. her relationship with her older children does not receive much attention, as everything is overshadowed by the misfortunes with her younger children. She does profess pride in the marriage of her youngest daughter, towards the end of her memoirs. She also mentions with pride that she has 29 grandchildren ("*kinds kind*").[143]

In the inheritance laws of the Cape, we find the last influence on parental relationships. Some publications suggest that different types of inheritance laws have an influence on parental and sibling relationships.[144] In the literature sibling rivalry and favouritism are mentioned as a result of that influence. The influence of different forms of inheritance law on family relationships has not been research for the Cape of Good Hope. The dichotomous legal system at the Cape would pose an interesting case, however. It would be possible to compare Cape Dutch (Dutch Roman Partible

[140] Malan, "The Cultural Landscape", 20. Josina van Dam is an example of a daughter taking over the liquor trade. Her family was already in the business, but she pursued it as well with the help of her second husband.
[141] Letter to Rev. James Kitchingman and wife of Bethelsdorp from their children, Cape Town Archives Repository (CTAR), Non-public records Archives (NPA), inv.no. A768, date: 30-10-1835, from: James and Joseph Kitchingman, to: mother and father.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A768, date: 26-03-1836, from: James Kitchingman, to: Rev. James Kitchingman [father].
[142] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 07-06-1839, from: Mother Hugo, to: Kindere.
[143] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, 38.
[144] Examples of such publication on the subject of inheritance law in a colonial setting are: Lee J. Alston, Morton Owen Schapiro, "Inheritance Laws Across Colonies: Causes and Consequences" *The Journal of Economic History* 44.2 (1984) 277-287. Marti Lamar, "'Choosing Partible Inheritance: Chilean Merchant Families, 1795-1825" *Journal of Social History* 28.1 (1994) 125-145.

inheritance laws) and the British (British primogeniture inheritance laws) family relationships in this context.

Some conclusions in the literature on this topic might also be applicable to the Cape Colony, however. For instance, primogeniture inheritance laws create a dependent position for the matriarch and unmarried children in case her husband dies. These dependents have to rely on the charity of the oldest son in such a situation. One can imagine that such a prospect might influence the relationship the matriarch has with her oldest son. For instance by favouring the eldest son over other children. Partible inheritance does not create such dependence. Under Dutch Roman Law, the remaining parent receives half of the inheritance while the children divide the other half equally (including the daughters). This means that based on inheritance the mother (or father) does not have to favour any of the children more than the others. More research on this topic is needed to verify whether these conclusions are really applicable to the Cape Colony as well. Ego-documentation, like the archival material used in this thesis, would make such research possible. [145]

Relationship with other family members

The relationship women had with their husband and children dominated much of their social life, but they also had other familial relationships. The archival material shows that these family ties were of much importance. This also has to do with the fact that the Cape was a relatively small community.

Parents

As we have seen earlier in this chapter, parental relationships were important for parents and children. The act of getting married could drastically change a child's relationship with their parents. However, this did not mean that marriage ended that relationship. but not necessarily cut all ties. Even Mrs. De Villiers relationship with her parents, which was marked by their disapproval of her religious ideas, remained intact after her marriage. Another example of early parental relationships with daughters can be found in the unmarried Swellengrebel sisters. Their parental relationship is limited to their father since their mother had passed away in 1744, seven years before the journal was written. Within this relationship, we see that they take on the caring role towards their father as well as their younger siblings.[146]

A different example of a parental relationship can be found in Mrs. De Villiers relationship with her father-in-law. This relationship receives quite some attention in the memoirs, as she and her

[145] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 31-32.
Alston & Schapiro, "Inheritance laws across the Colonies", 281, 283.
[146] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A673.

husband move in with him after marrying. She often writes quite lovingly about the old and almost blind man. It becomes clear that her affection for him also stems from his involvement in her children's lives. This becomes quite clear when one of her children dies and she writes; "that was a great loss to us [she and her husband], but the loss was even greater for our blind father."[147] Upon his death, halfway through the memoirs, she mentions the loss she and her husband feel. Her father-in-law in not mentioned in the later parts of the memoirs, but this is because the memoirs is written chronologically without flashbacks.[148]

Mother Hugo's mother is the last parent who is mentioned in the archival material. In her correspondence, Mother Hugo mentions her mother from time to time. The first mentioning is when she states that she seeks her mother's approval to marry in a letter to her aunt and uncle. Later letters mention that Mother Hugo's mother is visiting the family and that she longs to see her grandchildren again.[149] This grandmotherly involvement seems similar to Mrs. De Villiers' father-in-law. Pride in grandchildren seems to be somewhat of a universality since Mrs. De Villiers herself also proudly states that she has 29 grandchildren at the end of her memoirs.[150]

Siblings

In a society in which large families were the norm the next logical relationship to look at is the relationship with siblings. While families with seven children were common, it is noteworthy that women do not mention their siblings as often as one would expect. This could also be due to the dominance of women their relationship with husband and children, leaving little room for others. In some cases a lack of affection between siblings might also explain the lack of writing. Geographical distance between siblings could also have played a role.

The most elaborate example of siblings relationship can be found in the Swellengrebel journal, which was co-written by the sisters Helena and Johanna Swellengrebel. As unmarried women, their sibling relationships were not hindered by a husband or children. The women were mostly limited to each other's company while travelling to the Netherlands. The two sisters were of similar age[151], making them suitable companions for each other. While they seem to do much together, they do not speak of their relationship in the journal. Towards their younger siblings, Ertman and Stansie, the sisters

[147] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A 1005, f. 6. Original text: "dat gemis was voor ons groot, maar voor onse blinde vader nog grooter."
[148] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 9-11.
[149] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 29-01-1818, from: Nigt Hugo, to: Oom en Tante.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 01-07-1821, from: Moeder Hugo, to: Kindere.
[150] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 38.
[151] Helena Johanna Swellengrebel was 21 years old and Johanna Engela Swellegrebel was 18 years old.

have a more caretaking role, in the absence of their mother. They take care of their education aboard the ship and mention playing games with them.[152]

An example of a more mature relationship between siblings can be found in the correspondence of Mrs. Groenewald with her brother. The archive only contains one letter from Mrs. Groenewald to her brother, but the contents of that letter make clear that the siblings correspond regularly. Their correspondence also mentions another sister. In the post scriptum to the letter she thanks her sister for the letter Mrs. Groenewald had received from her. About her longing to see them again she says; "[My longing] is so strong, if I could fly I would do it."[153] This suggests that her siblings live closer together and that Mrs. Groenewald lives relatively far from them. The letter to her brother mostly speaks of health and religionn. It does not go into details about her personal life.[154]

In the legal documentation surrounding the inheritance of Jacob van Reenen to his widow Geesiena Cloete we find another sibling relationship. In these legal affairs, her brother most often acts as her legal representative.[155] While it also becomes clear that women were not legally bound to have a male legal representative it does seem to be the norm.[156] The use of such representatives does show the dependence a widow like Geesiena Cloete could have on her male relatives.

Aunts, uncles, and cousins

Expanding familial relationships even further we encounter women's relationships with aunts, uncles, and cousins. It is likely that these labels were used more loosely to include relatives who were actually further removed since no other labels are used to describe family members who are further removed.

In the correspondence of two of our Cape Dutch women we find references to relationships with the extended family. The first of these lies in the correspondence between Mother Hugo and her aunt and uncle Van der Merwe. In her earliest letter to her aunt and uncle, from 1818, she asks for their approval for her pending marriage. This request suggests that she had quite a close relationship with them. Multiple other letters, from later dates, also support this idea of a close relationship. In the

[152] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A673, date: 12-03-1751. They "played hand clapping games" ("speelde handtje klap") with their brother.
[153] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A2164, date: no date, from: Mrs. Groenewald, to: very dear brother ("seer geliefde broer"). Excerpt from original text: "wat die verlange aangaat om u bijde aangesigt te sien is so groot als ik vliege kon ik sou het doen."
[154] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A2164, date: no date, from: Mrs. Groenewald, to: very dear brother ("seer geliefde broer").
[155] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A573.4, date: 20-05-1821. Notary papers about the debt Geesiena Cloete will inherit from her late husband. She is represented by her brother, Sebastiaan Valentyn Cloete.
[156] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A573.4, date: 26-06-1807. Proof of debt written by a notary. It states that Jacob van Reenen has a debt of 6000 Guilders to Catharina le Sueur. In the documentation Mr. Le Sueur represents herself.

letters, both sides also mention the past and future visits to one another, suggesting they did live further apart.[157] The second example lies in the correspondence Mr. and Mrs. Groenewald have with their aunt G. Albertijn and cousin J. Morel. Since these letters mostly talk about daily activities they do not tell us much about their relationship, except that they stay in touch.[158]

In Johanna Duminy-Nöthling's diary another cousin relationship can be found. She mentions that her cousins Van Riet (a married couple) live with them. Johanna seems relatively close to her female cousin since she sometimes asks her out to come along for a ride with the carriage or other activities.[159] Similar to Mrs. De Villiers situation with her father-in-law, the Van Riet couple seems to be an intergraded part of the family while they stay at the Duminy house.

Relationship with servants and slaves

A group of people who are closely related to the household are the servants and slaves. It is important to note that the women themselves would not classify their social interactions with their slaves as a relationship. I have decided to include them because they are part of the women's social interactions on a daily basis. While many Cape Dutch families owned slaves, they were not considered part of the family. Also, their humanity was often undermined by their status as property. All of this makes it harder to describe the relationship women had with their slaves.

In the ego documentation, we see different degrees of dehumanisation of slaves. This dehumanisation is most clearly reflected in the absence of names and often even the absence of the term *slave*. Frequently used ways of referring to slaves and servants were "boy", "girl", or "maid."[160] Johanna Duminy-Nöthling does so when she says she "puts 4 boys to slaughtering the bonteboks and to cut biltong of it."[161] The labels also strip slaves of their age, since the labels are the same for young and old slaves. This can be seen in the Mrs. De Villiers memoirs when she speaks on the death of two "boys" who were 15 and 33 years old. She speaks about their death without any reference to human loss. Instead, she mentions that "these two cost us more than nine thousand Guilders."[162] It

[157] Some example of correspondence between Mother Hugo and her Aunt and Uncle are:
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 29-01-1818, from: Nigt Hugo, to: Oom en Tante.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 02-06-1820, from: A.J. van der Merwe, to: Nigt C. Hugo.
[158] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A2164, date: 18-12-1799, from: Aunt G. Albertijn, to: Mr. and Mrs. Groenewald.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A2164, date: 26-09-1799, from: J. Morel, to: Mr. and Mrs. Groenewald.
[159] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 43-44. Johanna asks cousin Van Riet ("Nigt van Riet") to join her for a drive ("ritje").
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 38. Johanna mentions cousin Van Riet his birthday; "… neef van riet was jaarig …".
[160] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 26. Cousin Van Riet is angry with her "boy" ("jonge") for being late.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A515.73, date: undated, from: Lady F. Nafies, to: Mrs. Maclear. Lady Nafies offers Mrs. Maclear the use of her "maid" when they prepare for a ball.
[161] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 66. Original text: "ik sette 4 jongens aan om de bontebokke afteslagten en de biltonge uyt te snijde…"
[162] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 29. Original text: "die twe koste ons boven de nege duisent Guldens."

is noteworthy that Mrs. De Villiers does show some affection to another slave, who dies earlier in the memoirs.[163] She fills a whole page describing their last conversations and how he died. Mrs. De Villiers makes it clear that her servants are slaves, but only rarely calls them that. Johanna Duminy-Nöthling does use the term "slave" on multiple occasions when she does not call them "boy" or "girl." She makes an exception for her handmaids, however, whom she calls by their names. Her handmaids, Mielthee and Lienthee[164], accompany her on most of her travels and assist her in many tasks. They also take care of her children. Johanna writes about them with some affection but almost never describes anything they do outside of her service.

Altogether the information in the ego documents about the relationship women have with their house slaves is quite clear. They are seen as nameless, faceless, and easily replaced. Those are the standards for the relationship. This does not mean that exceptions were not present, both positive and negative. In the literature we find examples of the ill treatment of slaves by their masters and mistresses. The sexual mistreatment female slaves by their masters was also widespread. In the early 19th century laws on slavery gave slaves the right to report such treatment to the authorities, which led to court cases of slaves against their masters and mistresses. It is unlikely that this legislation affected the relationship between women and slaves positively, as masters and mistresses saw it as their right to discipline their property.[165]

Relationships outside of the household

While the relationships above are related or limited to the household women also had relationships outside of the household. In chapter two we encountered working women who had relationships related to their work. The archival material offers one such example in Mr. Hasting's encounter with a female shopkeeper.[166] Through this encounter, we see that female workers, such as the woman in Mr. Hasting's account, could have very diverse social interactions.

In the archival material, we find numerous examples of women their social life outside of the household. Because this research is limited to written sources, these examples are dominated by relationships which were maintained on paper. Relationships which were mainly based on face-to-face interactions do receive attention, but to a lesser degree.

Examples of correspondence relationships can be found in the Groenewald archive. There we find an example of female friendship between Mrs. Groenewald and Mrs. Neethling. Their friendship is

[163] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005, f. 16. Mentions the other slave boy who died.
[164] Spelling of their names changes constantly. It does not become clear whether these are their actual names or names Johanna Duminy-Nöthling has given to them.
[165] Giliomee, "'Allowed such a State of Freedom'", 47.
[166] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 32-33.

reflected in the opening of Mrs. Groenewald's letter, which says; "My dearly beloved friend." Also, this letter was accompanied by a gift basket, showing her affection even more. The contents of the letter do not offer much information about their relationship since they mostly go into daily activities and the state of their health.[167] The archive also includes a letter from Mrs. Neethling to Mrs. Groenewald telling her "O how thrilled with joy I was that I received a letter from you again."[168] In the same archive, we find an example of friendship between Mr. Groenewald and a woman, Widow D. Smith. Her letter to him opens very friendly with the words "Dear friend" and refers to their ongoing correspondence. The letter mentions their common religious zeal, which seems of much importance to the writer. It is unclear how Mr. Groenewald and Widow D. Smith are acquainted. While it is normal for women to refer to oneself as "widow of" it might also suggest that Mr. Groenewald knew her late husband. This letter is the only correspondence between a man and a woman who were strictly friends in Dutch included in the research. This might suggest that such relationships were less common.[169] In Mrs. Mclear's correspondence archive many examples of letter based on companionship can be found. The diversity of her correspondents is limited since she only writes in English and most of her correspondents live in Great Britain. Only a small number of the letters was sent to people in the Cape Colony itself.

The second part of the social interactions at the Cape took place face-to-face in the daily lives of women. From correspondences and the other ego documentation, it becomes clear that social visits were standard practice at the Cape of Good Hope. Mrs. Maclear, as part of the newly landed British elite, corresponds with friends in the Cape to make appointments. In such letters she also discusses dinners and balls to attend. These notes suggest that her daily life was filled with such social visits.[170] These social visits were not limited to the elites, though. Mother Hugo, who was of humble means, also mentions visiting neighbours and friends in her correspondence.[171] In Johanna Duminy's diary, we also find examples of social visits. Every couple of days she has the carriage made ready for a drive around the neighbourhood. Some of these drives are planned as the mentioning of letters and appointment proof, but many visits to neighbours are unplanned. In her diary, she also mentions an

[167] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A2164, date: undated, from: S.J. Groenewald, to: Mej. Storm Huijsvrouw van mijn Heer de Heer Neethling. Original text: "Mijn tederbeminde vriendin". Reference to the gift basket can be found in the note accompanying the archive, the basket is not part of the archive.
[168] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A2164, date: undated, from: Mrs. Neethling, to: Mejuffrouw Susanna [...]urang huijsvrouw van Monsieur Jacobus Groenewald. Original text: "Og hoe verrukt van vreugde was dat ik weder een lettertje van U mogte onfangen."
[169] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A2164, date: 01-12-1798, from: widow D. Smith, to: Monsieur Jonathan Groenewald.
[170] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A515.73, date: undated, from: Lady F. Naifies, to: Mrs. Maclear.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A515.73, date: undated, from: Mrs. Boyle, to: Mrs. Maclear.
[171] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 07-06-1839, from: S.J. Hugo, to: Kindere.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454, date: 23-12-1840, from: Moeder S. Hugo, to: Kristie (Miss. C.E. van der Merwe).

unexpected social visit from the Landdrost to her and her family. These visits are part of a culture of hospitality, but can also be used to strategically improve relationships[172].

Conclusion

This chapters offers an overview of the relationships which are included in the archival material. While the women themselves are of diverse backgrounds we see very similar sets of relationships amongst them.

The most important relationships in women their lives are those with her husband and children. They are the most important because they take up the most time and receive the most attention from the women in the ego documentation. Only the women who are not yet married, namely the Swellengrebel sisters, show us examples of what daily lives without husband and children were like. These examples shows that there is more room for companionship (familial or otherwise) in the absence of a husband. The sisters also show us that they do gravitate towards their own patriarch and father.

While these relationships are important to all of the women the character of those relationships is quite diverse. The diversity in characters suggests that women have say in who they marry and what kind of a mothers they become. For marriage this might mean that a woman might choose to marry for love, or for more practical reasons, like business or religion. In the relationship women have with their children fear surrounding their children their health is a recurring topic. As Danelle van Zyl-Hermann explains these emotions are "intertwined with feelings of love, sadness, longing or even reproach."[173] These emotions influence the character of that relationship, as some mother seem more involved than others. While women seem to have some influence on the character of these relationships, they cannot decide whether or not to have these relationships.

Women their influence on their relationships increases as we move away from the nuclear family. In their relationships with other family members, like parents, siblings, aunts and uncles, women have more influence on the character and importance of that relationship. As a result, the archival material sketches a diverse image of these relationships. Some of the women seem to be close to their family, mentioning them often. Other women only mention their family on exceptional

[172] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 11. Johanna goes on a drive around the neighbourhood.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 43. A neighbour request Johanna to come and visit her.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 53-59. Johanna and her husband go to visit a woman whose husband is not present. His absence is not a problem.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137, f. 74. The Landdrost and his family come to visit them unexpectedly.
[173] Van Zyl-Hermann, "'Gij kent mijn gevoelige hart'", 68.

occasions. This relative absence of written references does not necessarily mean that the relationship is absent, but it does shows that they are considered less important.

When it comes to the relationships women have with their slaves this correlation between written records and importance is not applicable. Women did not seem to classify their social interactions with slaves as actual relationships. Instead we mostly see dehumanisation of slaves by using labels like “boy”, “girl”, or “maid.” The only exception to this full dehumanisation is Johanna Duminy-Nöthling’s relationship with her two handmaids. She is the only woman in the archival material who mentions them by name. She also displays some degree of companionship and affection towards her handmaids.

Outside of the family and household we find a number of non-familial relationships in the archival material. These are less numerous than the other relationships, and often make up far less of the written material. Correspondence between friends can be strikingly affectionate, however. These emotions show that, while less important, these relationships have a place in women their lives.

The main conclusion of this chapter is that women filled their live with a broad range of relationships. The importance of their relationship with their husband and children is reflected in almost all the archival material. The diversity in their relationships lies in the other relationships women pursue. In those relationships women have more freedom to choose, which is reflected in the diversity in relationships between women.

Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to give an overview of the daily lives of Cape Dutch women at the Cape of Good Hope between 1775 and 1825. For most of the colonial period Cape Dutch women remain neglected in the historical literature. This led to the question "where are the women?". Hermann Giliomee states that their absence in the historical literature is due to the lack of sources written by women. My research in the Private Archives of the Cape Town Archives Repository shows that there are numerous sources written by women, of which only a small number has been used for this thesis. These new-found sources encourage more research into Cape Dutch women's history.

The present historiography surrounding women at the Cape of Good Hope is marked by a white male bias. Historians, like Robert Ross and Danelle van Zyl-Hermann, try to change this bias, but it is still relatively dominant. As a result, the idea that women were limited to the private sphere is still presented in the literature. This idea seems archaic but is still present in colonial history. Chapter 2 set out to test the presumption that women were limited to the private sphere.

The archival material found in the CTAR seems to confirm the idea that women their daily lives were mostly limited to the private sphere. In these sources most of the women their activities are limited to the household and their family. One does need to consider that writing the ego documents, which make up these archives, was a leisure activity. As a result, women who had less leisure time, had less education, or had less of an inclination to write are not represented in this material. This can most clearly be seen in the literature on working women. That literature is based on a very different set of primary sources, which are almost never produced by the women themselves. In the CTAR material we only see an example of working women in the journal of Mr. Hastings, who meets a female shop owner.[174]

The image in the CTAR material that women are mostly limited to the private sphere can also be explained by the importance of women their relationship with their husband and children. As can be seen in chapter 3, these relationships were part of the "natural path" women were expected to walk down in life. That this was expected can be seen in the accounts by Lady Ann Barnard, who remained childless. She suggests that she would lie about having children "whenever I find the tide of pity and complacency too strong."[175]

The emphasis on the nuclear family does offer many insights into the daily lives of these Cape Dutch women, however. While women did not seem to have much of a choice in whether they would

[174] CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338, f. 32-33
[175] Lenta, "Degrees of Freedom", 58.

become a wife or a mother they did have some influence of the character of those relationships. In their relationships with their husband this influence is partly reflected in choosing a partner. While some women married for love or affection, some women married for more practical reasons.

In the relationships women have with their children we see the influence emotions like fear and anxiety can have on the character of relationships. These emotions, like many other emotions, are described surprisingly vivid. In correspondence and diaries women describe their fear about their children's health, but also the joy about their success. The statistics and anecdotes from the archival material show that their fears are based on reality, since many children die as a young age.

The daily activities in the archival material are also dominated by the nuclear family. Women had the role of carer around the household. They oversaw the preparation of meals, cared for the family's health, and took care of much of the children's education. All these activities are woven into the fabric of their daily lives. It is noteworthy, however, that with increasing wealth women seen to spend less time as carers for the family. Slaves could take care of the cooking and handmaids could take care of nursing, raising, and educating the children. This did not mean women neglected the household altogether, but it did mean they had more time for leisure activities. These activities often bring women outside of the household into the public sphere. In Johanna Duminy-Nöthling's journal these leisure activities are most clearly reflected. She often takes rides around the neighbourhood visiting neighbours and friends. This also shows that these women had more time for face-to-face social relationships outside of the household.

While wealthier women in the CTAR material spend more time outside of the household, all the women seem to have a surprisingly diverse social life. In the material many examples can be found of face-to-face and on-paper relationships the women maintain. These relationships range from the extended family to non-familial friends. Affection and emotions are often voiced vividly. The intertwining of emotions, as Danelle van Zyl-Hermann describes, is clearly visible in the longing, affection, and sorrow that are described in correspondence.

An overarching conclusion to this investigation into the daily lives of Cape Dutch women is that all these women are part of a common culture. This Cape Dutch culture is marked by its hospitality and strong relationships, even when living further apart. It is also marked by the rather exceptional legal position women have. Their relatively strong position in society has developed over time, and is noticed by outsiders visiting the Cape. The women themselves do not mention their exceptional position, since it is too ordinary to them. Even the contrast with British women, which receives quite some attention in the literature, is left unnoticed by the women themselves.

The conclusions that result from this paper's research go beyond the activities and relationships women filled their lives. It shows that women at the Cape are brought together by a common culture, but also thrive in their individual liberties. While some women use those liberties to work or acquire wealth, others might focus on family and the hardships right in front of them. When it comes to a common culture, conclusions can go beyond the reaches of Cape Dutch women. Their preoccupation with themes like food, religion and health have a universality to them. They can be found in all the women whose ego-documents are included in this research, and are likely a part of colonial life in general.

This paper offers insight into the daily lives of women at the Cape, but also opens up the available knowledge about women's relationships to other historians. By doing this it goes beyond the study of daily lives but also shows the value of the archival material that is found. It hopes to encourage other historians to use these sources to fill the gaps in the history of the Cape of Good Hope. As has been mentioned before; the material that is used in this thesis is only the tip of the "female ego-document iceberg". There is much more potential for research into women's history, as they were, are, and will be an important part of all societies.

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Appendix I

Notes on the archival material.

Inventory number	Short description	period	Language	Notes
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A137	The Private Journal of Johanna Duminy-Nöthling	1797	Dutch	This journal is also part of the source publication *Duminy-dagboeke* (see Bibliography).
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A338	Journal of a 1820-Settler (Mr. Hastings)	1819-1820	English	The journal has been transcribed into a typed out manuscript.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A454	Letters by Mrs. E.J. Hugo	1820-1859	Dutch	Most of the correspondence in this archive is between Mrs. Hugo and her children.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A515.73	Correspondence by Lady Maclear	1833 onwards	English	The archive consists of hundreds of letters to and from Mrs. Maclear. The selection that is for this paper is aimed at correspondence with women and family members.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A573.4	Estate papers of Geesina W. Cloete, widow of Jacob van Reenen	1807-1834	Dutch	The archive includes documents from before her husband's death but also from after his death. They illustrate the legal position of widows at the Cape.

CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A673	Journal of the sisters Swellengrebel	1751	Dutch	The sisters Swellengrebel are the only unmarried grown women included in this paper.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A768.4	Letters by the Kitchingman brothers	1835-1836	English	Two letters from Joseph and James Kitchingman to their parents. They are away to boarding school.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A1005	Rebound diary of M.D. Villiers	1780s-1850s	Dutch	This diary has been written at different periods in Mrs. Villiers life, also looking back to her childhood. In the paper it is referred to as a memoirs for this reason.
CTAR, NPA, inv.no. A2164	The Groenewald correspondence archive	1780-1806	Dutch	This archive consists of eleven letters from and to Mr. or Mrs. Groenewald. The letters offer much information of (marital) relationships.