

Saartjie by Hendrik Hofmeyr: sign systems and context

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this dissertation is to investigate how context is constructed in Hendrik Hofmeyr's opera *Saartjie* through the verbal and non-verbal sign systems. In this qualitative study, I have followed a combined interpretivist and constructivist perspective. *Saartjie* focuses on the final night of Saartjie Baartman's life in Paris, while she reminisces about her life she left behind in South Africa to travel abroad. The opera and libretto is composed from Saartjie's perspective and, as a result of this, an anachronic and verbal narrative is presented to the audience. Through this type of presentation extratextual information is presented in the form of intertextualities, among others. Apart from Saartjie the character, the orchestra also non-verbally communicates ideas and concepts through the orchestra's speaking ability (*Sprachvermögen*) and this adds to the complexity of presenting various contexts in the opera. The orchestra's *Sprachvermögen* creates actants, which are not physically observable on the stage but essential to support the anachronic narrative to aid in the construction of various temporalities and spatialities in the text. In the text, various leitmotifs are employed, which not only support the constructions of context in the text but also binds the opera into an interconnected whole. The concept of what a text constitutes is broadened in line with Derrida's poststructuralist notion that everything can be considered a text. By interpreting the text, it becomes possible to make sense of the human experiences and contexts, which, in turn, needs to be decoded to be understood. *Saartjie* moved away from being a work – which is considered a static entity – to become a text through the process of the close reading and decoding the sign systems found in the opera. The data in this study will be analysed through a close reading, which falls within the paradigm of hermeneutics. I have made use of close reading as a strategy to discern the underlying meanings of *Saartjie*; this is, in turn, shared with the reader throughout the course of this dissertation. Other qualitative research methods include the use of interviews and questionnaires to corroborate the findings that arose during the course of this study. Furthermore, the sign systems in the text at the hand of Peirce's semiotic theory was also utilised. I have purposefully chosen Peirce's semiotic theory to interpret the signs in the text because Peirce's theory takes human feelings and psychology into account when interpreting signs. In this study, I have concluded that there are three main factors upon which context rests. These are temporality, spatiality, and the ideological zeitgeist. These three factors are brought to the fore through the verbal and non-verbal sign systems present in *Saartjie* and, as a result of this, these sign systems had to be decoded to understand their deeper meaning and contribution to context. I have used techniques in this study which are found in post-structuralism and literary theory and demonstrated that these theories can be fruitfully applied in the analysis of an operatic text as well.

Keywords: Saartjie Baartman, Hendrik Hofmeyr, *Saartjie*, hermeneutics, sign systems, decoding, otherness, text, context, semiotics, orchestral *Sprachvermögen*, actants, leitmotifs, textual analysis, close reading

OPSOMMING

Die hoofdoel van hierdie verhandeling is om te ondersoek hoe konteks in Hendrik Hofmeyr se opera *Saartjie* gekonstrueer word deur middel van die verbale en nie-verbale simboliese tekens. Ek het gebruik gemaak van 'n gekombineerde konstruktiewe en interpretiewe perspektief. In *Saartjie*, val die fokus op die laaste aand van Saartjie Baartman se lewe in Parys terwyl sy terug dink aan herinneringe uit haar verlede in Suid-Afrika en die lewe wat sy agtergelaat het om oorsee te reis. Die opera en libretto is vanuit Saartjie se oogpunt gekomponeer wat tot gevolg het dat die verbale verhaal anakronisties aangebied word aan die gehoor. Dit verskaf inligting wat buite die verteltyd van die opera val en dus word ekstra inligting aangebied in die vorm van intertekstuele tekste en dies meer. Deur die spraakvermoë (*Sprachvermögen*) van die orkes word nie-verbale idees gekommunikeer wat bydra tot die kompleksiteit in die aanbieding van verskeie kontekste in die opera. Die orkes se *Sprachvermögen* skep abstrakte aktante wat nie fisies waarneembaar is nie, maar noodsaaklik is vir die anakronologiese aanbieding van die teks én verleen hulp in die konstruksie van verskillende temporaliteite en ruimtes. In die teks is verskeie leitmotiewe ook teenwoordig, wat ook help om konteks in die teks te konstrueer en terselfdertyd bind die leitmotiewe ook die opera in 'n onderlinge geheel saam. Die begrip van wat 'n teks is, is verbreed om te strook met die poststrukuralistiese teorie van Derrida wat aandui dat alles om ons as 'n teks kan beskou word. Dus, deur die teks te interpreteer, is dit moontlik om sin te maak van die menslike ervarings en kontekste, wat op sy beurt gedekodeer moet word om ten einde geïnterpreteer te word en om die verborge betekenis binne die teks te verstaan. *Saartjie* word omskep in 'n teks deur die proses van indringend lees en dekodeer van die simboliese tekens in die opera, en beweeg dus weg van die statiese entiteit om net as 'n werk geag te word. In hierdie studie sal die inligting ontleed word deur indringend te lees, wat om die beurt binne die paradigma van hermeneutiek val. Sodoende word die onderliggende betekenis van *Saartjie* aan te toon. Ek het ook gebruik gemaak van ander kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetodologieë wat onderhoude en vraelyste insluit om die inligting wat gedurende die indringende lees van die teks na vore gekom het te staaf. Verder het ek die simboliese tekens in die teks gedekodeer aan die hand van Peirce se semiotiese teorie wat daarvoor voorsiening maak om menslike gevoelens en die sielkundige uitwerking van simbole ook in ag neem wanneer simboliese tekens geïnterpreteer word. Deur die verloop van hierdie studie is drie faktore geïdentifiseer wat bydra tot die konstruering van konteks naamlik: tyd, ruimte, en die ideologiese tydgleuf. Hierdie drie faktore word na vore gebring deur die verbale en nie-verbale simboliese tekens in *Saartjie*, wat gedekodeer is ten einde die dieper betekenis en bydrae tot die konstruering van konteks te verstaan. In hierdie studie het ek gebruik gemaak van tegnieke wat gevind word in post-strukuralisme en letterkundige teorie en getoon dat hierdie tegnieke en teorieë suksesvol toegepas kan word in die ontleding van 'n operateks.

Sleuteltermes: Saartjie Baartman, Hendrik Hofmeyr, *Saartjie*, hermeneutiek, simboliese tekens, dekodeer, Andersheid, teks, konteks, semiotiek, orkestrale *Sprachvermögen*, aktante, leitmotiewe, teksanalise, indringend lees

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction and orientation to this qualitative dissertation. In this chapter, the rationale behind the study will be introduced and, through the statement of purpose and research questions, the central phenomenon will be investigated. Furthermore, the research design and methods will be introduced to the reader. This chapter will conclude with the chapter division, which, in turn, serves as an overview of the study.¹

1.2 Rationale

In 2010, the University of Cape Town, in collaboration with the Gordon Institute for Performing and Creative Arts (GIPCA), commissioned five short opera of 20 minutes each. Five South African composers, in celebration of the South African College of Music's centenary celebrations, composed these operas. The five composers who were commissioned are Bongani Ndodana-Breen, Hendrik Hofmeyr, Martin Watt, Peter Klatzow, and Péter Louis van Dijk (in order of performance of the opening night of 21 November, 2010). The five operas were collectively presented as *Five:20 Operas Made in South Africa* (henceforth designated as *Five:20*). The inspiration behind the project was provided by the Scottish Opera's project *Five:15 Operas Made in Scotland*, which was initiated by the director of the Scottish Opera, Alex Reedijk (Clark, 2010).

The above-mentioned five micro-operas² deal with South African issues, both contemporary and historical. The operas resemble the arc of a pendulum that swings from modern South Africa (*Hani*) to early colonial South Africa (*Saartjie*).³ A forward motion in the arc lands in Apartheid South Africa with the third opera,

¹ In this dissertation, I will use the generic term *he* in a non-sexist and non-derogatory manner when referring to a person of either male or female gender to avoid cumbersome constructs such as *s/he*, *(s)he*, or *he or she*, which would make the text denser and not as easy to read (Mouton, 2001:131). The pronouns *he* and *she* will however be used when referring to a specific male or female person or author – this distinction will not be pointed out as it will be clear in the particular context in which it is used.

² *Micro-opera* should not be confused with *chamber opera* (for a further discussion on this point, see 1.2.1). *Micro-opera* is a term I use to differentiate this unique mutation of opera from chamber opera. The micro-opera has a set time limit of 15, 20, or 30 minutes, and can include a small instrumental ensemble or orchestra for accompaniment. Chalmers (2003:223–231) defines chamber opera as an opera that is written for small ensembles with particular reference to instrumentation and the added convenience that it may be performed in smaller theatres. Strauss' *Ariadne auf Naxos*, in its original 1912 version, is one of the first examples of a chamber opera. I will, however, use the term opera throughout this dissertation and it should be understood as referring to the concept of micro-opera.

³ Both in South Africa and England, she went by the name of Saartjie or "Sartjee" (Crais & Scully, 2009:72). In 2002, the South African government advised that the diminutive – Saartjie – was deemed insulting and belligerent and specified that the name, which appeared on her baptismal certificate, be used. Her baptismal certificate specifies Sara although her surname is spelled erroneously Bartmann (Crais & Scully, 2009:107). Throughout the course of this dissertation, I will use Saartjie when referring to Sara Baartman and it should not be understood in a derogatory manner at all but rather understood to be as consistent with Hofmeyr's work and his use of her name. Scully and Crais (2008:307) points out in the Netherlands, a diminutive is a sign of affection and Saartjie would have been known as 'Sartje' in Dutch.

Tronkvoël, swinging back to late-colonial South Africa with *Words from a Broken String*, and finally the *subject matter-pendulum* comes to rest in modern South Africa, where *Out of Time*, the last opera, takes place.

The first opera – Bongani Ndodana-Breen’s *Hani*⁴ – takes Chris Hani’s assassination as reference and questions post-Apartheid South Africa (Spies, 2010:80). The second opera, *Saartjie*⁵ by Hendrik Hofmeyr, with the libretto by the composer in collaboration with Fiona Zerbst, focuses on Sara Baartman’s last hours in her room in Paris, where she reminisces about her past in South Africa and current situation as a showgirl in Paris. Using Apartheid South Africa as a setting for his micro-opera, Martin Watt’s *Tronkvoël*⁶ (Jailbird), with libretto by Aalwyn Roux, is based on Breyten Breytenbach’s poetry and life. This micro-opera features a libretto that is written in Afrikaans. The penultimate opera *Words from a Broken String*⁷ by Peter Klatzow, with the libretto by Michael Williams, transports the audience back to a somewhat unfamiliar figure in South African history – namely linguist Lucy Lloyd and her work alongside her brother-in-law, Wilhelm Bleek. Their interest in South Africa was in particular to study the language and culture of the San peoples, as well as to document this thoroughly. This work is based on Pippa Skotnes’ monograph, *Claim to the Country* (2007). The opera *Out of Time*⁸ composed and with the libretto by Péter Louis van Dijk, transports the audience members back to contemporary South Africa. The opera metaphorically explores the issue of xenophobia in South Africa, using an *imaginary* minibus taxi ride.

Spies (2010:79–80) wrote a report after attending the performance of *Five:20* and engaged in personal communication with the five composers. This report refers to “those musical events that struck [her] on the first hearing when [she] attended the performance” (Spies, 2010:80). Spies commented on the music, subject matter, and her experience of the operas. Overall, Spies is quite positive about the project and the chosen genre for the event. According to her, these operas show us different kinds of boundaries, real or imagined, psychological or pre-conceived. Even these “fences, bars and barriers” can be diffused by “listening [to] and understanding [the] messages [contained in the operas, which in turn] could help break down these obstructions to stimulate new ways of thinking and new ways of doing” (Spies, 2010:89). These alternative ways of perceiving micro-operas breathes new life into opera as a genre in general; providing composers, librettists, and audiences the opportunity to experience opera in a new fashion, as well as dealing with issues that are historical or contemporary, and perpetually relevant for specific audiences.

Blake (2010) also reviewed the *Opera Five:20* operas. His opinion differs from that of Spies. He claims that the intention of these micro-opera was “a concerted effort at political correctness in the libretti” (Blake, 2010:42). He finds it strange that “while the various opera makers (impresarios, director, librettists,

⁴ Directed by Marcus Desando.

⁵ Directed by Geoffrey Hyland.

⁶ Directed by Marcus Desando.

⁷ Directed by Geoffrey Hyland.

⁸ Directed by Geoffrey Hyland.

designers) advanced their claims during the build-up, the kingpins, the composers, brought to the process a curious mismatch between subject and music” (Blake, 2010:42). Blake’s article further refers to the apparent discrepancy between subject matter and its musical representation. Spies (2010:89) refers to “listening and understanding [the] messages [contained in the operas]”, saying that these “messages” can be examined in the use of both musical and textual symbolism as found in the scores and libretti of *Opera Five:20*.

1.2.1 *Saartjie* as monodrama/opera

Saartjie is subtitled as a *monodrama*⁹ by Hofmeyr (2014) and most people associate the monodrama with Schoenberg’s model of the monodrama entitled *Erwartung* (Expectation), Op. 17.¹⁰ Hofmeyr (2014) states “the subtitle I gave it myself is *monodrama* based sort of on the idea of one-person-opera of very short duration”. In essence, I consider *Saartjie* as an amalgamation of an opera and monodrama. *Saartjie* is the only character on the stage for a large portion of the opera (the monodrama element) with interpolations from the Parisians who appear briefly in the opening and twice later in the opera (the operatic element).

In Schoenberg’s *Erwartung*, an unnamed woman (*Eine Frau*) arranges to meet her lover in a forest but instead finds his dead body. The unnamed woman is the only character on the stage for the duration of the monodrama and the libretto is composed from her perspective as she experiences the full gamut of her emotions, ranging from depression to jealousy, and she remains alone as the monodrama ends (Kovács, 2000:552). From the description of Schoenberg’s *Erwartung*, we can see that this was also Hofmeyr’s intention in *Saartjie* – *Saartjie* Baartman should have been the only character on the stage, with the choirs offstage.

The performance of *Saartjie* in the accompanying DVD¹¹ (Hofmeyr, 2010), however, does not adhere to Hofmeyr’s intentions due to the director’s decision to include the Parisians on the stage, singing the invented French song *La Marseillaise*. Hofmeyr (2014) points out the purpose of the choir (as the Parisians) were to add understanding to the monodrama and the choir in the background would enhance certain elements in the opera. The inclusion of the Parisians detracts from the ideal of the monodrama however *Saartjie* does not interact with the Parisians per se. The inclusion of the Parisians does aid the addressee in placing the opera in a certain time and space however the efficacy of the ideals of the monodrama is negated, and the work rather became an opera. Hofmeyr’s stage directions – such as *The revellers pass under the window* and *The revellers begin gradually to move into the distance* – in the libretto may also lead to confusion for a person of a non-operatic background to interpret. The intention, according to Hofmeyr

⁹ Throughout the course of this dissertation, I shall use the term *opera* but it should be understood in the context that Hofmeyr designates *Saartjie* as a monodrama.

¹⁰ Libretto by Marie Pappenheim (Kovács, 2000:552).

¹¹ Live recording by Tony Mittelmeyer, Final Cut Editing and DVD Productions. The accompanying DVD can only be viewed with VLC Media Player – free download available from: <http://www.vlc-player-download.com/> please choose your operating system (Windows or Mac/OSX) accordingly.

(2014), as gleaned from the interview, was to have the choir off-stage at all times to create the idea that everything was happening in Saartjie's mind due to her feverish state, in combination with being inebriated.

With the aforementioned in mind, the set time-limit of 20 minutes, as specified for *Five:20*, and the limitations posed by the producers with regards to instrumentation,¹² *Saartjie* is to be considered as a micro-opera (see 1.1: footnote 2).

1.3 Purpose statement

This dissertation is concerned with the question of how the sign systems (verbal and non-verbal) in *Saartjie* by Hendrik Hofmeyr contribute towards the construction of various contexts in the opera. The sign systems include those relating to the visual elements, music, and libretto of *Saartjie*. The reason for focusing on only one of the five operas for this study is due to the complexity of the text¹³ and themes, which include those of imprisonment, otherness,¹⁴ displacement, and dehumanisation.

1.4 Research questions

In a qualitative study, I seek to understand and “to explore the complex set of factors surrounding the central [research] phenomenon” (Creswell, 2009:129). This is achieved by posing a primary research question, supported by a secondary research questions. Through this, the research problem is raised, explored, and examined for a deeper understanding. The arising findings are integrated in a scholarly fashion and culminate in the final research project.

1.4.1 Primary research question

How do the verbal and non-verbal sign systems contribute to the construction of context in *Saartjie*?

1.4.2 Secondary research questions

From the primary research question, as set out in 1.4.1, the secondary research questions, which supports the primary question, emanates:

- What are the verbal and non-verbal sign systems within the context of opera, in general?
- What are the verbal and non-verbal sign systems in *Saartjie* specifically?

¹² “[w]e had to stick to the time limit of twenty minutes and the orchestration was in a way prescribed – we could use fewer instruments than the ones allowed, but not more” (Hofmeyr, 2014).

¹³ The term *text* refers to written and non-written texts, including visual, musical, and literary artefacts (see 3.2 of this study).

¹⁴ *Otherness* is interpreted from Said's formulation as found in *Orientalism* (1978:325): “How does one represent other cultures? What is another culture?”

1.5 Research design and methodology

In the majority of qualitative research-studies, I aim to engage in research, which seeks a more in-depth cognisance of a particular phenomenon, rather than searching for unpremeditated relationships in the research. Furthermore, instead of scrutinising or evaluating the discernible features of a specific phenomenon, qualitative research intends to comprehend the human conceptions and interpretations about the particular phenomenon at hand (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:81).

Because this study seeks to understand the contexts in which Saartjie Baartman existed, this hermeneutic study has a qualitative design and will be interpretivist and constructivist in nature. The methods used for data gathering and data analysis include a literature review, interviews, and textual analysis, including a close reading of all the texts.

1.5.1 Data gathering

Hart (1998:13) defined a literature review as

the selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views, and the effective evaluation of the documents in relation to the research being processed.

According to Jesson *et al.* (2011:74), the traditional literature overview aims to be comprehensive and its aim is to present a summarised review of the current body of knowledge. The traditional literature review, furthermore, relies on purposeful selections made by myself, including or excluding sources based upon their content (Jesson, *et al.*, 2011:105).

In this study, I opt for an integrated literature overview by employing and integrating material from as many sources as possible, including the score and libretto, live DVD production of the performance (included on a DVD), newspaper article, and articles from peer-reviewed journals, interviews with the composer and librettist, as well as programme notes.

It has been mentioned that one of the methods of gathering data involves interviews. I conduct a semi-structured interview¹⁵ with the composer and the librettist¹⁶ of *Saartjie*. The semi-structured interview is a form of interviewing that is employed to corroborate data emerging from other data sources (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:87). Nieuwenhuis further states that the semi-structured interview allows for the probing and deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied; the interview is conducted by means of a predetermined set of questions.

¹⁵ Refer to Appendix B for the interview with Hendrik Hofmeyr (Appendix C contains Hofmeyr's informed consent to the interview)

¹⁶ Refer to Appendix D for Fiona Zerbst's responses to the questionnaire (Appendix E contains Zerbst's informed consent to the questionnaire).

Interviews with the composer and librettist are done to glean their personal experiences about the work. This helps me to gain more insight into the background of the work and to verify any assumptions and inferences made during analyses of the primary texts. This implies that the composer and librettist's narration of their experiences with this work will be taken into account when the research report is compiled.

1.5.2 Data analysis

Having completed the systematic, integrated literature review, I can analyse the primary texts in three phases. The initial phase, concerning the analysis of the primary texts (video, music, and libretto of *Saartjie*), is approached from the visual plane. The second phase considers the musical signs, acoustic, and, when appropriate, graphic signs. Ultimately, I interpret the symbolism within the libretto to derive further meaning.

The methods that are used to analyse the data are derived from the literature review, the interviews, and especially the primary texts, which relate to textual analysis, including the close reading. Textual analysis is a method that researchers who need to analyse, for example, cultural, social, and philosophical texts, employ in their research. It is simultaneously a data gathering and a data-analysis process that allows researchers to comprehend and understand how members of different and assorted societies and subcultures understand who they are, and how the said societies and subcultures form a part of the spheres they, in turn, inhabit (McKee, 2003:1). By interpreting the text, it becomes possible to make sense of the human experiences and contexts articulated in the texts. Brummett (2009:9) asserted that close readings require special care and deliberation, a contemplation of all the signs that are being read. Additionally, a "close reading is a mindful, disciplined reading of an object with a view to deeper understanding of its meaning ... [which is] shared with others in a *criticism*" (Brummett, 2009:26). The close readings of the video, music score, and libretto of *Saartjie* inform a better understanding of the meaning of the contexts that are constructed.

1.6 Strategies for validating the findings

Maree and van der Westhuizen (2010:37) pointed out that, in a qualitative study, results can vary, as a repetition of the same research will yield different results because "human nature is never static" (Merriam, 1998:205). To surpass this problem, various strategies to validate the findings are needed to ensure that the phenomenon is studied with rigour and reliability.

1.6.1 Rigour, reliability, and validity

Without rigour, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility. Hence, a great deal of attention is applied to reliability and validity in all research methods (Morse *et al.*, 2002:14). Furthermore, according to Morse *et al.* (2002:18–9), there are a few strategies that may be employed to "ensure both reliability and validity of data". The first aim is that of coherence between the method and the research questions posed.

During the process of triangulation and due to the nature of the material at hand, the research questions may have to be altered due to the changing nature of the findings.

Secondly, “the sample must be appropriate, consisting of participants who best represent or have knowledge of the research topic. This ensures effective saturation of categories, with optimal quality data and minimum dross” (Morse *et al.*, 2002:18). The participants in this study are the composer and librettist, and interviews were conducted with them. Thus, in the light of the aforementioned, the participants are indeed appropriate for the sample – the composer and librettist embody the reliable, first-hand knowledge needed to conduct the study.

Merriam (1998:20) expressed that, in qualitative studies, reliability is enhanced by “results [that] are consistent with the data [which is] collected” by me. In this study, triangulating the findings, as will be discussed in the succeeding section, enhances the reliability of the findings.

1.6.2 Triangulation of the findings

Taylor *et al.* (2006:253) defined triangulation as “the use of more than one method in studying the same phenomenon, in order to validate the phenomenon”. By means of triangulation, confidence is enhanced in the ensuing findings because more than one method or point of view is incorporated (Bryman, 2003:1142). Furthermore, “social research is founded on the use of a single research method and as such may suffer from limitations associated with that method or from the specific application of it; triangulation offers the prospect of enhanced confidence” (Bryman, 2003:1142). This ties in with the *rigour* to which Morse *et al.* (2002:13–22) refers.

The process of triangulation in this dissertation is done by corroborating and validating the data gathered, as well as inferences made during the literature review, the textual analysis, and the close reading, with data gathered during the interviews with the composer and librettist of *Saartjie*. Upon completion of the interviews, all new data and inferences are integrated in a scholarly fashion with existing material.

1.7 Anticipated ethical issues

I am aware that the issue of ownership of collected data may be an issue – in this case, all scores, audio, and visual material remain the intellectual property of the participants/composer/librettist involved during the interviews. All transcripts of interviews and correspondence between myself and concerned parties are included in this study as a verbatim transcription in Appendix B to validate my citations and quotations. Creswell (2009:91) recommended that researchers make use of personal agreements between researcher and participant to designate the ownership of the collected data. For this reason, I have included copies of these agreements Appendices C and E as well.

1.8 Chapter division

This chapter introduces the rationale and background to the study, as well as the main research question and the sub-questions that arise. These questions are answered throughout the course of this study and a conclusion is presented in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 2, the research design and the research paradigm, from which this qualitative study is approached, is presented. Moreover, the research methods are introduced and explained, as well as data collection methods.

The concept of what a text is, was broadened by Derrida (1986) beyond limit. In Chapter 3, the difference between a work and a text is explained – the work can only become a text through the “activity of production” (Barthes, 1977a:157). A brief section on intertextuality is also included, due to the intertextual references in *Saartjie* – not only in the libretto and music but also in the costumes. The discussion of text is expanded to include the concept of the narrative text, as the opera is ‘narrated’ to an audience (addressee) through singing accompanied by an orchestra. Apart from the characters which are present in *Saartjie* and placed in a specific spatiality and temporality, the orchestra through its speaking ability (*Sprachvermögen*) becomes an actant, which also takes part and plays a role in the opera.

From the abovementioned, it is clear that a text is first and foremost encoded by an author/composer/librettist (the addresser) and the reader/audience (addressee) must decode this text. This is done by studying and interpreting the signs that are present in the text through semiotics. It is important to note that a text takes place in a certain space and time, and these factors aid in our understanding of the context in which *Saartjie* is set.

Chapter 4 deals with the close reading of *Saartjie*. A brief biography is offered to introduce the reader to the key epochs in Saartjie Baartman’s life, until her death in Paris. The concept of decoding, which was referred to in the previous section, comes to fruition during the close reading at the hand of C. S. Peirce’s semiotic theory and the application thereof to the musical score and libretto of *Saartjie*. The leitmotifs that are present in the text are pointed out and explained with other music examples to aid the reader in identifying these throughout the close reading.

In the final chapter, a summary and discussion of the findings are presented and serves to answer the main research question. The close reading of *Saartjie* is discussed and the insights I have gained from this study are also presented. Suggestions for further research are also presented in the final chapter

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

2.1 Introduction

“Research is a systematic process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting information (data)¹⁷ in order to increase our understanding of a phenomenon about which we are interested or concerned” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:2). The purpose of research is to learn and discover that which is not yet known; to ask meaningful questions which have not been meaningfully answered yet; questions that are probed and investigated by means of relevant data that is gathered and interpreted. In this chapter, the research design and methods, as well as the methods employed to ensure validity and trustworthiness, are discussed.

2.2 Research design

“The [research] design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions” (Yin, 2009:26). The process of data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data thus culminates in the final phase, which is the written report (Creswell, 2007:5). These processes are necessary to ultimately answer the research questions posed in the study – this may be accomplished by employing various methods and tools relevant to the specific research paradigm for the study. It is important that the results in a research report are beyond scrutiny. It is a matter of trustworthiness and this is achieved by means of analysing all collected data, both primary and secondary, critically and verifying results. There are three types of research designs: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. However, this study will particularly fall within a qualitative research approach and thus qualitative methods will be followed.

2.2.1 Qualitative research

The distinction between qualitative and quantitative studies rests upon *how* the research is conducted: qualitative studies are framed by means of words, concepts, and open-ended questions, as opposed to quantitative studies where numbers and closed-ended questions (and quantitative hypotheses) guide the research process (Creswell, 2009:3). Newman and Benz (1998:xi) advised that qualitative and quantitative research approaches do not stand opposed to one another, as opposing dichotomies; they rather represent different ends of a continuum, where the mixed-methods approach (which employs strategies from *both* qualitative and quantitative approaches) falls between these two approaches.

To provide a single, succinct definition of what qualitative research entails proves to be an almost impossible task, due to the myriad of definitions provided by scholars across the discipline of research studies. Numerous scholars have offered their own definitions of the term, to highlight a few: Denzin and

¹⁷ Paratheses in round brackets are presented as they appear in the source, whereas square brackets indicate additional comments by myself.

Lincoln (2005), Creswell (2007), Merriam (2009) all have divergent opinions as to what does and does not fall within the scope of qualitative research. Creswell (2007:37) offers the following definition:

Qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflexivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem, and it extends the literature or signals a call for action.

The importance that qualitative research places on observing a participant in his natural environment is taken into consideration in this dissertation (see Creswell, 2007:37). The “face-to-face interaction” to which Creswell (2007:37) refers takes place during interviews with Hendrik Hofmeyr, both the composer and librettist¹⁸ of *Saartjie*. Creswell (2007:38) also referred to the “researcher as key instrument” in the data collection process. My role includes “examining documents, observing behaviour, and interviewing participants” (Creswell, 2007:37) rather than simply relying on one, sole data source during the study period. In this study, I observe the contexts of the opera, *Saartjie*, by studying the staged opera as captured on video. From these observations ‘external’ sources, such as the interviews, as well as the existing literature about the topic, are employed to verify the observations made and to aid in the construction of context. In qualitative research, I aim to be an objective observer who focuses on examining the meanings the participants portray/say about a certain topic, issue, or problem. I want to offer a trustworthy account of the participant’s views and experiences.

According to Creswell (2007:38), the qualitative research process is emergent – an initial plan for research cannot be predetermined precisely as it is predominantly found in quantitative research. Qualitative researchers are not bound by “tight cause-and-effect relationships among factors” (Creswell, 2007:39) but work with complex situations emerging from the research. During the process of conducting the research, it is possible for newer, fresh findings to arise. In addition to the emergence of new data, methods of data collection may change; the questions being posed may be changed; as Creswell (2007:39) mentions, that over the course of a study, the research questions may change, the methods of data gathering may also change; the participants in the study and the places that were studied may have been modified. An important factor in research, Creswell (2007:39) pointed out, is that a researcher should always endeavour to collect “first-hand information from the participant(s) and consequently the research may have to be re-addressed and changed accordingly to obtain the information required” (Creswell, 2007:39).

¹⁸ The libretto is a collaboration between Hendrik Hofmeyr and Fiona Zerbst.

As in most qualitative studies, I employ a “lens to view their studies, such as the concept of culture, central to [for example] ethnography, or gendered, racial, or class differences” (Creswell, 2007:39). In this study, this ‘lens’ or epistemological perspective (see Merriam, 2009:11) will be constructivist and interpretivist, as to probe deeper into *Saartjie* to understand how context is constructed by means of the sign systems employed in the opera. Creswell (2007:39) points out that the way in which a researcher understands a problem cannot be detached from his “own background, history, context, and prior understandings”. Creswell (2007:39) pointed to how all of these interpretations may present multiple views of the same phenomenon or problem; the researcher’s interpretation of the data is one of many possible interpretations. Qualitative research has to do with the act of interpretation, which falls under the scope of hermeneutics.

2.2.2 Hermeneutics

Schwandt (2007:36) defined hermeneutics as the “art, theory, and philosophy of interpreting the meaning of an object (a text, a work of art, social action, and the utterances of another speaker, etc.)”. In addition to this, Robinson (1997:43) also advanced the view that hermeneutics is both an art form and a science, and continues to explain that Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of suspicion is an attempt made by Ricoeur to find a middle-ground between the science and art of hermeneutical interpretation, without affording either an unconditional prominence above the other. As Ricoeur (1970:27) stated, “hermeneutics seems to me to be animated by this double motivation: willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigor, vow of obedience”.

In this study, Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of suspicion¹⁹ is employed, as this particular form of hermeneutics is geared toward “unmasking, demystifying, and removing the illusions of symbols, which not only reveal but conceal meaning” (Kaplan, 2005:462). The hermeneutics of suspicion, thus, pursues and exposes the uninspected assumptions upon which a text may rely, such as political, historical, psychological, philosophical, sexual, and linguistic (Culler, 1997:68).²⁰ It also seeks to interpret hidden and distorted meanings by literal and specious meanings. By means of the hermeneutical circle and interpretation as described below, these unexamined assumptions are examined during the course of this research project to aid in the construction of context in *Saartjie*.

2.2.2.1 Interpretation and the hermeneutical circle

Ricoeur (1974:13) attached the following distinction to “interpretation”, which he regarded as “the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels

¹⁹ Paul Ricoeur advanced the phrase in 1970 in his monograph *Freud and Philosophy: an essay on interpretation* and based his hermeneutics of suspicion on “[t]hree masters, seemingly mutually exclusive, dominate the school of suspicion: Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud” (Ricoeur, 1970:32).

²⁰ Culler (2009:92) originally only lists the following assumptions: “political, sexual, philosophical, [and] linguistic”. However, in this study the other assumptions listed are of equal importance to aid in the construction of context.

of meaning implied in the literal meaning”. Thus, it can be surmised that the purpose of an interpretation is to augment our perception of various texts. Schwandt (2007:288–9) emphasised that poststructuralists, following Derrida’s assumptions, hold the view that *everything* can be considered as a text – cultural artefacts, life experiences, events, human experience, conversations, acts of violence/alienation/compassion/love, etc. The work of art may contain “obscure, ambiguous, apparently incoherent, anomalous, unexpected, inaccessible, perplexing, or latent that invites illumination” (Carroll, 2005:310).

Heidegger (2002) advanced the idea of the hermeneutical circle in his essay, *The Origin of the Work of Art*. In Heidegger’s hermeneutic circle, the interpreter brought his own knowledge, understandings, and prejudices to the circle (Gallagher, 1992:106). Through his research, Gadamer (2004) expanded Heidegger’s idea of the hermeneutical circle – interpretation and understanding constantly moves to-and-fro, between the whole and the parts, and back to the whole (Gadamer, 2004:291). Figure 1 has been adapted from the diagram posited by Gallagher (1992:106).

This diagram shows the process of interpretation, according to Gadamer’s circle. The interpreter’s own prejudices, pre-understanding, or knowledge (see A)²¹ are necessary aspects for his understanding of the present (Debesay *et al.*, 2008:58). These aspects (see B) are brought to the hermeneutical circle when an object is interpreted (Gallagher, 1992:106). The examination of the object – whether it is a text, work of art, or another human being’s utterance(s) – brings new perspectives to the forefront (see C) and interpretation takes place. Understanding the ‘interpreted’ object (see D) causes us to challenge our own prejudices and pre-understandings, and to perhaps rectify these given the ‘new’ insight gained (Gallagher, 1992:106; Gadamer, 2004:522).

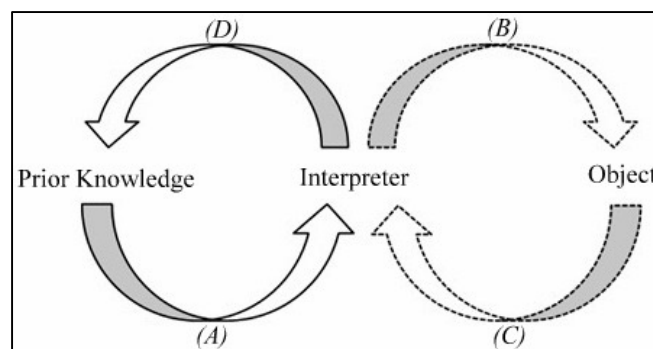


Figure 1: The hermeneutical circle in philosophical hermeneutics (Adapted from Gallagher, 192:106)

Heidegger (1996:143) advises that the interpreter should not view the hermeneutical circle as a ‘vicious’ circle with no means of escaping due to the constant movement between the whole and parts nor does an interpreter have to look for ways to avoid the circle. Rather, it should be seen as a means of gaining new knowledge because we will “understand [an object] in a new way” (Gadamer, 2004:296). The

²¹ Gallagher (1992:106) refers to *tradition*.

hermeneutical circle does raise the issue of going around in circles among scholars and interpreters. The interpreter may feel that it becomes impossible to ‘escape’ the vicious circle. Conversely, because we do not really arrive at a ‘final’ interpretation of an ‘object’, the interpretation *must* be laid to rest. It is only when we accept our limitation(s) as interpreter that we realise the need to employ other methods as well to establish trustworthiness in our research and interpretation. Techniques – such as triangulation, close reading, and visual interpretation – aid interpreters in establishing trustworthiness in their research.

2.2.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm may be seen as the epistemological perspective against which the research takes place (Merriam, 2009:11). By following the same “accepted examples of actual scientific practice” (Kuhn, 1962:10), as it pertains to a specific epistemological perspective, follow the same “law[s], theor[ies], application[s], and instrumentation[s]” that govern a specific research discipline.

This study follows a combined approach of interpretivism and constructivism. It is not the aim of this dissertation to enter into a discussion of the demarcation of the field of interpretivism or the exact scope of it. It should be noted that most scholars avoid making extremely fine distinctions between interpretivism and constructivism, and have employed terms, such as *anti-positivism*, *interpretivism*, *qualitative inquiry*, and *naturalistic inquiry*, to denote more or less the same concept. Although it may be challenging to propose a definite, demarcated definition of interpretivism, Terre Blanche and Durrheim (2006:6) described an interpretive paradigm as one in which the “internal reality of subjective experience” can be studied by an ‘empathetic’ researcher who uses qualitative methodology, including interactional methods and interpretation. Erickson (1986:119) preferred to employ an over-arching definition for “the whole family of approaches to participant observational research”.

Interpretivism has its roots in hermeneutics, which is concerned with the theory and practice of interpreting phenomena – this developed in the nineteenth century as a theoretical framework against which “meaning and understanding” is constructed. It also included literary theory (Nieuwenhuis, 2010:58). Interpretivism refers to the approaches, which study social life, and bestows a central place upon understanding or interpretation. It is thus the task of the researcher to unearth the meaning of that what is being studied or of that which needs to be understood (Schwandt, 2007:160). Merriam (2009:9) claimed that the terms ‘interpretivism’ and ‘constructivism’ are often used interchangeably, as qualitative researchers do not discover new knowledge as much as that they construct it.

Crotty (1998:54) labelled the assumptions below as *constructivist*, while Nieuwenhuis (2010:59–60) labelled them as *interpretivist*. They do, nevertheless, propose the same opinions as set out below:

- Human beings construct meanings as they live their lives in the world they are (constantly) interpreting subjectively. The qualitative researcher probes these understandings by means of open-ended questions posed to participants in the research project (Crotty, 1998:54; Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:59).

- Social life is a human construct and humans interpret the world by means of their historical and social perspectives – “we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture” (Crotty, 1998:54).
- “By exploring the richness, depth and complexity of phenomena we can begin to develop a sense of understanding of the meanings imparted by people to phenomena and their social constructs” (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:60). When we start uncovering how humans construct meanings, our grasp of the whole is enhanced.

As set out in the above, an interpretivist paradigm is an appropriate paradigm for this study because of the complex nature of *Saartjie* and as the text of this opera encompasses the libretto, music, and visual elements. According to Merriam (2009:8), interpretivism “assumes that reality is socially constructed [and thus] there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event”. By means of this paradigm, the various contexts articulated in the opera can be interpreted and the various meanings understood by means of exploring the libretto, music, and visual elements.

2.2.4 Research methods

Through the research methodology, I present the methods, which are employed in this study, and *how* the data is accumulated, investigated, and interpreted (Creswell, 2009:233).

2.2.4.1 Textual analysis

Belsey (2013:160) viewed textual analysis as a “close encounter with the work itself”. This close encounter leads to interpreting the work in a ‘close’ way, as to analyse the work by posing questions, such as found in Belsey (2013:160–61):

What is it about? What kinds of prior knowledge might illuminate it? What difference does it make if we locate the work textually and historically? What position, or range of positions, does the text offer its reader? How can we best let the text itself set the agenda for research that will generate insights? And finally, how far, as a result of all this labour, can we expect to arrive at a definitive interpretation?

These questions aid and guide a researcher in his process of interpretation and interpreting the text. Belsey (2013:167) also warned researchers against bringing more hypotheses to the work because the text “provides the material for analysis”. The text is not a *blank canvas*, which may be filled and coloured with whatever and whichever the textual analyst deems fit. In this study, textual analysis is employed to interpret and lead to a meaningful understanding of *Saartjie* as text and how context is constructed. I approach *Saartjie* as a text, as a whole – though the *parts* (libretto, music, and visuals) will be analysed as to ascertain the meaning encapsulated in these parts but also to relate them to the *whole*. Concerning the music, the technique of hermeneutics²² is employed to construct the meaning *behind* or *inside* the music.

²² Viljoen (2012:39) wrote that techniques such as the hermeneutics of suspicion and recovery are employed in historically informed performance practice (HIPP) in the creative arts, to place these arts in their “historical and social contexts”. These “historical and social contexts” to which she refers, take into account “the historical context [...] temporal, spatial and ideological contexts” of the music and its performance.

According to Rink (2010:223), an initial “close study of the score [is also necessary] in order to reveal its particular message or meaning”. This, in turn, is essential to be able to “construct a musical narrative” and relate it to an audience by means of a performance. As pointed out by Belsey (2013:160), this is in fact a “close encounter with the work [score/music] itself.” Lastly, close reading of the visual text is approached from Rose’s (2013:69–92) point of view. Rose (2013:72) proposed “compositional interpretation” as a method, which observes the gist of visual media carefully and critically. Furthermore, Rose (2013:74) suggested semiology and discourse analysis as methods to interpret visual media. By employing these different methods in the interpretation in the text of *Saartjie*, a deeper understanding of the text is reached and this ultimately aids in constructing context in the text.

2.2.5 Data Collection

In a qualitative study, a researcher purposefully selects data sources that best suits the study and that aid him in interpreting and answering the research questions (Creswell, 2009:170). These include predetermined documents and visual material, as well as semi-structured interviews and literature reviews.

2.2.5.1 Interviews

An interview is a two-way conversation between an observer and a participant, where the observer (researcher) asks the interviewee (participant) questions to probe for information and a deeper understanding of the interviewee’s “ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviour” (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:87). Interviews are classified as one of three types: open-ended, semi-structured, and structured. In the open-ended interview, the interview follows a conversational style and it is the intention of the researcher to gather information about the participant’s own views, ideas, and beliefs. The open-ended interview is also usually conducted over a period of time, with numerous interviews during this period. The semi-structured interview is employed to substantiate research insights gleaned from other sources. The interview is usually conducted with a predetermined set of questions however deeper, probing elaboration on a set of questions is also allowed, to glean a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Structured interviews make use of detailed questions that are developed in advance, much like a questionnaire. This type of interviewing is frequently employed in large sample groups or multiple case-studies to ensure consistence in the gathered data. However, if an interview is overly structured, it may inhibit the researcher from probing for a deeper understanding (Nieuwenhuis, 2010b:87). One of these three types of interviews is generally followed.

In this study, I utilise a semi-structured interview format because of the intricacy of the subject matter at hand. By probing the interviewee for a deeper understanding or to elaborate on a certain point aids me in understanding and interpreting the gathered data. Furthermore, by means of interviews, the research bias will be eliminated because gathered data will be compared and checked against the data gathered from the interview.

2.2.5.2 Literature review

The literature review may be defined as a “thoughtful and insightful discussion of related literature” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010:77) pertaining to a research project. The literature review aids the researcher in constructing a backdrop and framework, to place it within the “context of related studies” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010:77) in the field of study.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2010:77–8), the literature review serves four broad purposes. Firstly, it demonstrates suppositions behind the research questions; it should, however, also describe the suppositions, values, and *a priori* knowledge the researcher brings to the study. Secondly, it illustrates that the researcher is aware of the corpus of research in the particular field of study and has engaged with the theories located in the field. Thirdly, it illustrates the researcher’s ability to identify lacunae in previous studies and literature, and thus it will be addressed in the study. Lastly, the research questions are refined and redefined, “by embedding those questions in larger empirical traditions” (Marshall & Rossman, 2010:78) by means of the literature review.

Jesson *et al.* (2013:10–12) specified two types of literature reviews, namely: traditional and systematic; while Torraco (2005: 356–367) referred to a third, the integrated literature review. The traditional review is often based on a researcher’s personal selection of sources and offers a greater scope to reflect upon the literature. A key point, however, is that the researcher has to point out his rationale and method to qualify why certain sources are employed and thus it will aid in the reader’s understanding of the selected literature. The authors do, however, warn that the traditional literature review may be biased (Jesson *et al.*, 2013:79–80). Sweet and Moynihan (2007:1) defined the systematic literature review as a review that provides “a systematic, transparent means for gathering, synthesising and appraising the findings of studies on a particular topic or question. The aim is to minimise the bias associated with single studies and non-systematic reviews”. The systematic literature review is described by Khan *et al.* (2011:1) as a “research article that identifies relevant studies, appraises their quality and summarises their results using a scientific methodology”. Torraco (2005:357) stated that the integrated literature review may be divided into two categories: the first, as a topic grows and expands along with the knowledge around and about it, an integrated review will address both the ‘old’ and ‘new’ knowledge and, in most cases, means that new and fresh perspectives may arise within the said mature topic. The second, “new and emerging topics that would benefit from a holistic conceptualization and synthesis of the literature to date” and consequently “a new model or framework rather than a reconceptualization of previous models” (Torraco, 2005:357) may emerge.

Employing these three types of literature review in the study at hand, I establish trustworthiness and validity in the review of the literature, as it ensures that the results are beyond scrutiny. This is done in the form of an integrative literature review representative literature is reviewed, critiqued, synthesised, and then assimilated. By means of this literature review, new frameworks and perspectives on a particular topic can be engendered and add to the overall corpus of research (Torraco, 2005:356).

2.3 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have pointed out the importance of what research is and how it has been conducted in this study. It has been established that this research projects is a qualitative research study and I aim to be an objective observer. This study will follow an interpretivist and constructivist paradigm. As pointed out in 2.2.3, interpretivism has its roots in hermeneutics. The research methods are from literary theory, where hermeneutics is one of these methods. Through the hermeneutics of suspicion, the text is explored and ultimately interpreted. In a qualitative study, I purposefully select data sources that aid in the interpretation of the phenomenon being studied, through interviews, a literature review, and carefully selected documents, peer-reviewed articles, and monographs pertaining to the research project. In Chapter 3, a review of the literature pertaining to the study is offered.

CHAPTER 3: TEXT, SIGN SYSTEMS, AND CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explores and explains the concept of text. It considers what constitutes a text with reference to the theories of Barthes and Derrida especially. The discussion is expanded to include the narrative text: the concepts of story, time, space, as well as the characters, actors, and actants, which are placed in the narrative text and how all of these concepts pertain to opera. Furthermore, the concept of intertextuality and its bearing on the text is also explored and discussed. The processes of encoding and decoding, with regard to the sign systems, is discussed next. Peirce's theory of semiotics is discussed as well. The chapter concludes by discussing the concept of context.

3.2 Text

The word *text* stems from the Latin *textum*, meaning “to weave” (Winkler, 2009:25). According to Winkler (2009:25), the literary author uses words and sentences to *weave* “a ‘web’ of words”, much like weavers use their threads to produce a fabric or woven item. Barthes (1977a:159) referred to a text as “a tissue, a woven fabric” of meanings. Following Derrida's and Barthes' arguments, as are set out below, the interlaced nature of the text is explained.

Poststructuralists follow Derrida's notion that *everything* can be considered a text. Derrida (1986:167) stated that he used the word *text* in the broadest sense of the word; it is not limited to the page upon which one writes nor is the text contained and confined to a book. Derrida thus found it necessary to reform and broaden the concept of text without any definite limitations. The concept of text is consequently unlimited and includes, among others, “life experiences, events, relationships, activities, practices, cultural artifacts, and so forth” (Schwandt, 2007:289). According to Cornell (1995:57), human experiences are also in need of decoding and interpretation. Because humans are situated in philosophical and political systems²³ as well, these systems can also be read as texts.

Barthes (1977a:155–164) presented the following arguments about how a work differs from a text. The work can be thought of as a physical entity that can be held in hand, such as a book that occupies a space on a library or bookshelf. The work can only become a text through the “activity of production” (Barthes, 1977a:157). Through the process of performance, the work is transformed into a text, which can be interpreted and unlocked to discover the deeper meanings. As social conditions change and time progresses,

²³ Critics Anne McClintock and Rob Nixon challenged Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) for degrading a political system, such as Apartheid, to a mere text and he responded in an open letter to them. In this letter, he explained that he was not merely turning a blind eye to the harsh realities of the political institution but that he was “challenging the existing politics of meaning that support oppressive systems such as apartheid” (Cornell, 1995:57).

different groups depending on their social background and prior knowledge may understand a text differently, to name two examples.

Barthes (1977a:158) stated that “the text can be approached [and] experienced in reaction to the sign” because the symbolism found in the work has been unlocked and performed. New interpretations of the text arise as different addressees reinterpret it in different times. This points to the text’s plurality or “the intertextual in which every text is held, it is itself the text-between of another text” (Barthes, 1977a:160). This plurality or “text-between of another text” does not point to the text having various meanings but rather the ‘explosion’ of interpretations that can take place as the text can be interpreted differently by different addressees over time. Another difference between a work and a text is that of consumption. When the reader does not actively engage with the work to unlock and probe its deeper meaning, it cannot be unlocked, and consequently the reader is “bored [which] means that one cannot produce the text, open it out, *set it going*” (Barthes, 1977a:163). Finally, the pleasure of the unlocked text leads to a feeling of non-separation between the addressee and addresser – this joy or pleasure transcends all barriers of social relations and language.

Although Barthes’ propositions mainly have to do with written works of art, such as plays, novels, and the like; his proposals are applicable universally to all of the arts. The text moves beyond being a mere work and, through the acts of interpretation and presentation, evolves to become a text which can almost be seen as being alive with a life of its own. Derrida’s proposition takes text to the broadest sense of the word – a tapestry woven and interwoven with human experience and interpretation.

In Chapter 4, I conduct a close reading of the text – the macro-structure of *Saartjie* that focuses on the last night of her life in Paris – however the text embraces numerous *micro-texts*, furnishing the addressee with extratextual information by means of anachronies. These micro-texts are presented as intertextual references in the forms of an allusion to Cuvier’s autopsy report, a brief allusion to Cesar’s return to South Africa after handing Saartjie over to Rèaux, the three traditional South African songs, and *La Marseillaise*. All of these micro-texts aid in the construction of context in *Saartjie*, since these micro-texts provide additional information about Sara Baartman’s life both in South Africa and abroad. In 3.2.1, I discuss the concept of intertextuality and how it can be applied in the close reading of *Saartjie*.

3.2.1 Text and intertextuality

To pin down a single, authoritative definition of what intertextuality is, is an arduous task and it is not the intention of this dissertation to offer the complete history of intertextuality. On the surface level, intertextuality may be described as texts, which are placed in ‘conversation’ with one another. Kristeva (1986:37) defined intertextuality²⁴ as follow: “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is

²⁴ Julia Kristeva first introduced the term *intertextualité* in her 1969 essay titled *Word, Dialogue and Novel*.

[thus] the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity”. The term intertextuality is used as an umbrella term that encompasses all the potential associations that may be established among texts. Associations may “be based on anything from quotes and indirect references to indirect allusions to common words and even letters to dependence on language itself” (Miscall, 1992:44).

Most sources dealing with intertextuality refer specifically to the works of Saussure (1959), Barthes (1981), Bakhtin (1982), and Kristeva (1986), within the paradigm of semiotics and post-structuralism. It has to be noted, however, that Kristeva drew upon Bakhtin’s theories of dialogism and polyphony in the novel in her essay *Word, Dialogue and Novel* and subsequently introduced his work to a wider Western audience.

Worton and Still (1991:1–2) pointed out that a text does not function in complete isolation from other texts: an author is primarily a ‘reader of texts’ before the author creates and produces texts. We engage with the world around us on a daily basis and ‘absorb’ influences and references. Consequently, the created text “is inevitably shot through with references, quotations and influences of every kind” (Worton & Still, 1991:1–2). If an author, for example, alludes to another text and the reader is unaware of it, this allusion will remain dormant. However, if a reading brings a fresh and new perspective to the text that the author may have been unaware of, the reading may lead to a new and fresh interpretation.

Kristeva (1986:37) said that a text “is an absorption and transformation of another [text]” and Barthes (1977a:160) described a text as being “woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages [...] antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony”. Every text is thus layered with meanings (social, racial, emotional, cultural, psychological, etc.), which the author brings to it from his/her own background. These meanings may not be the same for the author and the reader who may be separated by time and space – each reader will thus interpret the text with his own knowledge, creating a ‘mosaic of meanings’, in keeping with the Kristevan description.

The libretto of *Saartjie* is woven with references to Cuvier’s writings about Sara Baartman, citations of South African folksongs and traditional song, French song, and echoes of simple songs composed about her as well. All of these intertextualities in the libretto fleshes Saartjie as not only a multi-cultural character (Hofmeyr, 2014) but also aids in *understanding* the situation Saartjie *could have* found herself in during her stay in Paris, as in Hofmeyr’s imagined *fabula* (see 3.3.1 for a further discussion).

Crook (2014:156)²⁵ considered intertextuality in music as an important matter because it is “a universal and inevitable characteristic of musical composition and performance ... [because] all compositions of a musical tradition share common vocabularies and rules”. In the strict sense of the word, opera is a narrative

²⁵ Crook’s (2014:153) monograph *Orlando di Lasso’s Imitation Magnificats for Counter-Reformation Munich* discusses intertextuality, with regard to the “transfers of thematic, polyphonic, or harmonic content from one work to another”.

story related to an audience by means of singers singing a libretto and accompanied by musicians – opera thus follows and shares the “common vocabularies and rules” (Crook, 2014:156), as found in the operatic practice. Intertextuality, thus, aids the researcher in decoding the work’s meaning by means of semiotics and the relationship the work may share with the original work it was drawn from.

Borrowing in music is a form of intertextuality and thus it claims that a composer bore knowledge of the other musical work from which he is borrowing to fashion a new work (Burkholder, 2014). Within the spectrum of borrowing, a composer may appropriate another musical composition to suit his needs in the ‘new’ composition. The musical intertextuality, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, in *Saartjie* is in the form of borrowing by utilising three South African songs (*Al lê die berge nog so blou*, *Thula Thu*, and *O Gurutse*), and the French national anthem *La Marseillaise*. These are not only quoted in the libretto but their melodies have also been employed by Hofmeyr to suit the situation in which they are employed, as well as his compositional style.

The manner in which intertextuality in *Saartjie*, in combination with the observations about time and space, assists in the creation of context in the opera is addressed in the close reading of *Saartjie* in Chapter 4. However, it is necessary to extend this discussion of text and intertextuality to what a narrative text is, as opera is considered a narrative text.

3.3 Narrative text

Bal (2009:5) summarised a narrative text as a text in which a story is brought to life and is related by an addresser to an addressee by means of a chosen medium or a combination of media. The medium can be “language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof” (Bal 2009:5). The combination of various mediums can result in, for example, a text – such as an opera – which takes place within a certain time (see 3.3.2); a certain space (see 3.3.3) in which the characters, actors, and actants (see 3.3.4) are placed. Two terms – *syuzhet*²⁶ and *fabula* – stem from Russian Formalism and are essential elements when discussing a narrative text. Herman (2009:93) defined the story as “the chronological sequence of situations and events that can be reconstructed on the basis of cues provided in a narrative text”. The *cues* to which Herman referred relate to the two aspects of a story, being the *syuzhet* and *fabula*. The plot of the story (*syuzhet*) is often confused with the story line (*fabula*), which furnishes the reader with a description of the happenings in the story (Shklovsky, 1970:170). The discussion below clarifies these two aspects of the story. When an addressee is presented with two narrative events, he will search for “casual or spatial or temporal links” and through these links the addressee creates a figmental construction of the story.

²⁶ In this study, I shall retain Shklovsky’s original spelling of *syuzhet* instead of the transliterated *sjuzet*.

3.3.1 Story: *syuzhet* and *fabula*

Syuzhet “refers to the order and manner in which events are *actually* presented in the narrative” (own italics added) (Cuddon, 2013:286). “Events, actors, time, and location” are the raw constituents upon which the *fabula* is built (Bal, 2009:8). The *fabula* comprises the events that are “caused or experienced [by the actors in a] series of logically and chronologically related events” (Bal, 2009:5) as found in the story. The *syuzhet*, thus, builds upon the imagined, raw materials as found in the *fabula* and is fashioned into a pleasing whole, by means of various narrative strategies, such as “*in medias res*, re-construction, retardation, parallel plots, ellipsis, and others” (Stam *et al*, 2002:71). When we are “presented with two narrative events, we look for causal or spatial or temporal links. The imaginary construct we create, progressively and retroactively, was termed by [the Russian] formalists the *fabula*” (Bordwell, 1985:49). We shall see in Chapter 4 how the details, as imagined by Hofmeyr, in addition to the actual chronological events that occurred in Saartjie’s life and after her death, form the basis of the *fabula* in *Saartjie*.

3.3.2 Time

As mentioned before, a narrative text is situated within temporal and spatial dimensions, which constitutes a specific context (see 3.5). Bal (2009:77) referred to three basic forms of time in the arts and narrative: micro-time, day-to-day time, and monumental time. Micro-time may be described as “the small time of moments and the variations of intensity of experience cross through the regulated time of the day’s occupations” (Bal, 2009:77). Clocks, schedules, and the like regulate day-to-day time that refers to going about daily life and this type of time. When considering historical events, we experience a sense of long-term time that stands in contrast to monumental time, which “aspires to eternity” (Bal, 2009:77). Herzfeld (1991:10) described monumental time as follow:

between social²⁷ and monumental time lies a discursive chasm separating popular from official understandings of history. Social time is the grist of everyday experience ... It is the time that gives events their reality, because it encounters each as one of a kind. Monumental time, by contrast, is reductive and generic. It encounters events as realizations of some supreme destiny, and it reduces social experience to collective predictability. Its main focus is on the past – a past constituted by categories and stereotypes.

Monumental time refers to the past and memories associated with a particular temporality and spatiality and how these elements are remembered and handed down from one generation to the next. The process of remembering the past inscribes these events into monumental time. The aspiration to eternity, to which Bal (2009:77) referred to, can, however, be negated. When events are no longer deemed to be important by succeeding generations, they are replaced by other events that are considered to be important and relevant to them. These ‘new’ events will then be inscribed into monumental time. Having a better understanding of the concept of time, we can now consider works of art based on time.

²⁷ Bal (2009:77) referred to “day-to-day time”

Bal (2009:77) distinguished two forms of art based on time: firstly “time-based arts” and secondly “still [artifacts]”. Time-based artworks include, according to Bal (2009:77), “narrative, film, theatre, video, dance, and music ... [as they] unfold in time” when such an artwork is articulated by an addresser to an addressee. On the other hand, “still artifacts” produce unchangeable works of art; which includes, but is not limited to, “photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, and architecture” (Bal, 2009:77). However, these works of art do *take time* to be produced but once they are produced, these works of art become works of art *frozen in time* and can be handed down from one generation to the next, where each generation ascribing their own meanings to the artwork. Artworks, whether time-based (such as opera) or still artefacts (still images taken from the opera), can be analysed and interpreted by means of textual analysis, as pointed out in the previous chapter (see 2.2.4.1). Time-based artworks can be *interrupted* by narrative strategies, such as anachronies and analepsis.

Herman (2009:181) defined anachrony as a “nonchronological narration, where events are told in an order other than that in which they can be presumed to have occurred in the storyworld.” Genette (1980:48) stated that an anachrony may “reach into the past [analepsis] or future [prolepsis]”, which means the anachrony is removed from the present time. From this, it can be seen that the concept of time may be interrupted in order to furnish additional information by means of a flashback to prior happenings (analepses) or anticipate and prepare the addressee for events that will still come to pass (prolepses). These additional fragments of information may be seen as parentheses, standing aside from the information being remarked to the addressees. Strategies, such as analepses and prolepses, also add complexity to the *syuzhet* of the narrative.

The flashback – or *analepsis* – is employed to recount prior happenings, which the protagonist remembers. At other times, the *analepsis* is employed by the addresser to explain unanticipated happenings that have been related by the addressee (Fludernik, 2009:34). In *Saartjie*, the process of anamnesis is employed in combination with the *analepses*. An anamnesis can be described as harking back to mental impressions, persons, or happenings (Cuddon, 2013:34–5). In Chapter 4, we shall consider how the anamneses, in combination with the *analepses*, furnish the addressee with further information about Sara Baartman’s life, prior to moving to Europe.

External analepses are found completely outside the first narrative – events that have taken place before the events that are presented in the first narrative. Furthermore, it serves to furnish the addressee with an isolated piece of information in order to understand a specific event (Genette, 1980:49–50). In *Saartjie*, Saartjie as the protagonist, refers to an event where artists at Cuvier’s laboratories drew her – this is a remote portion of knowledge that is stated to allow the addressee to understand the events on the stage. Other external *analepses* will be identified and discussed in the next chapter.

In *Saartjie*, there is one example of a *mixed analepsis* or *analeptic prolepsis*, which, in turn, is discussed in the next chapter. Genette (1980:49) defined this somewhat rare occurrence as an *analepsis* “whose reach goes back to a *point earlier* and whose extent *arrives at a point later* than the beginning of the first

narrative” (own italics added). In *Saartjie*, it is, thus, a type of analepsis, which refers to prior happenings but at the same time foreshadows events that are still to happen. With the discussion of time, I now turn the attention to the concept of space.

3.3.3 Space

Any narrative has to occur within a certain time (as pointed out above) and a certain space, as will be discussed in this section. Viljoen (2007:28) asserted that there is always a relationship between characters and the space in which they find themselves, for example, how and where a specific character is positioned within a space. Furthermore, Bal (2009:136) referred to the “space in which the character is situated, or is precisely not situated” as the ‘frame’ – another term that relates to context.

Bal (2009:136) claimed that characters employ three senses, in particular, in the perceptual representation of space: sight, hearing, and touch. In the case of opera, both the performer and audience more easily perceive the space. Although a stage is a certain size, elements, such as backdrops with scenery, lighting, properties (such as furniture, et cetera), create a space which can be deep, such as a garden with large lawns, or small, like an intimate sitting room in a house. Hearing is a bit more difficult to portray, with regard to portraying a space. A bell tolling softly indicates the idea of distance and, if it is combined for instance with a backdrop with a town, it creates the idea that the actor is somewhere far away or deep in town or perhaps even a distance away from the town. Suddenly perceived whispering indicates that someone is close or in the same room as the character (Bal, 2009:136). Lastly, touch is even more abstract than hearing – it can be quite difficult to relay touch from a stage to an audience and this falls more within the world of literature. According to Bal (2009:136), “tactile perception is often used in a story to indicate the material, the substance of objects.”

On the macro-level, space refers to a geographical area that may be measured in terms of the actual volume it takes up in square meters. Looking at the micro-level of interpreting space, it is more than mere occupation in terms of measurement; factors such as language, costumes, and stage properties and furniture also contribute to creating space. As mentioned earlier, employing backdrops in an operatic production – in combination with the furniture and stage properties – places the performers in a certain space and creates depth on the stage but can also place the opera in a certain time; both space and time contribute to the construction of context.

As mentioned above, costumes and clothing help the opera production team to portray a certain period in time. This may also be said with regard to costumes constructing the concept of space; the Parisians create the idea that Saartjie finds herself in nineteenth-century Europe. However, any doubt as to *where* in Europe she finds herself is eliminated by the language in which the choir sings. In this case, language helps to construct the concept of space in *Saartjie*. With the Parisians singing simple little songs about Saartjie, one

can infer that she finds herself in France, something Saartjie confirms when she sings: *oh these damned Parisians*.

There is, however, a world²⁸ *outside* Saartjie's room on the stage, even more so *beyond* the stage, which is achieved by means of actants and music's *speaking ability* or *Sprachvermögen* (see 3.3.4 for a more detailed description). The music, in the opinion of Hofmeyr (2014), creates a dualistic space, which is, firstly, situated outside Saartjie's room but also, secondly, in her imagination. The Parisians, who are dressed in French period costume, create the outside world that excludes Saartjie from European society. Sharpley-Whiting (2007:309) argued that Saartjie was placed in the European's hierarchy of animals, as a highly developed animal and used as a benchmark by which Western evolution is judged. The space inside Saartjie's imagination comes to the fore in the final section of the opera, when Saartjie reacts to the *Voices of the Ancients* who are calling her *home to where your loved ones dwell*. These spaces or worlds are discussed in further detail in the following chapters.

With an understanding of the aforementioned elements of narrative text and about how characters are placed in a particular time and space, the discussion turns to the concept of characters, actors, actants, and how they relate to the narrative text.

3.3.4 Characters, actors, and actants

According to Martin and Ringham (2000:20), in the semiotic studies of texts, the term 'character' or 'actor' refers to perceptible entities which play a part in the discursive level of a narrative story; the concept may refer to an individual, an anthropomorphic or zoomorphic organism, an assemblage (e.g. the Parisians in *Saartjie*), or abstract concepts, such as fate and the like. Furthermore, the term *actor* has superseded the conventional terms *character* and *protagonist*.²⁹ While characters resemble people, they are still created and imagined by an author. Although the character resembles a real person, it has no persona or thoughts of its own, nor aptitude to act; the character is nonetheless one of the most essential elements of a narrative text (Bal, 2009:112–13). Operatic characters (as addressers) are portrayed as real persons on the stage and they are capable of human expression and emotions, countenance, gesticulation and so forth.

An actant has the potentiality to communicate ideas to the addressee about certain situations in the text and, as Martin and Ringham (2002:18) indicated, "an actant is someone or something who or which accomplishes or undergoes an act. It may be a person, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic agent, a thing or an abstract entity". From this, we can see that actants can be divided into one of three categories. Actants can also be individual or collective (a group such as the Parisians or Scientists in *Saartjie*). Hébert (2011:73) expanded upon the viewpoint of Martin and Ringham (2010:18) as follows: firstly, through

²⁸ *Space* and *world* will be used as interchangeable synonyms in this dissertation.

²⁹ Although *actor* has superseded the term *character*, I prefer to refer to Saartjie and the Parisians as *characters* rather than *actors*, to avoid confusion with the *actants*.

anthropomorphism it may refer to a human, a talking animal, or objects, as found in fables and fairy tales. An inanimate object or element has to be *personified* to fulfil the role of being and becoming an actant. Secondly, a tangible article or element, which could, for example, be an animal or object, can be an actant as well. However, actants are not limited to the tangible articles or elements either and may include more abstract constituents, such as the distance a person has to travel, or an intangible element, such as moonlight (it can be observed, but not physically held in hand). Lastly, an actant can also refer to a concept, which includes human emotions, such as fear or excitement, or more abstract concepts such as freedom, hope, or courage (the leitmotifs in *Saartjie* are actants, referring to different concepts, which will be pointed out during the course of the following chapter, see 4.5.2). In *Saartjie*, there are two physically observable characters: Sara Baartman and the Parisians. *Saartjie* is the protagonist whereas the Parisians form a collective antagonist. Further to this, the *actants*, which are articulated and anthropomorphised by means of the use of specific instruments, are Réaux, the Scientists, the *Inau*, and the *Voices of the Ancients*.

The discussion thus far clearly indicates that opera is narrative text made up of a multitude of texts, which include the libretto, music, visual and dramatic elements; texts that can be defined and considered individually and as a whole. The libretto and music of an opera operate in close collaboration with one another: the music furnishes the libretto with a vehicle for expressing the written text and vice versa. An opera, in its whole, is a text in which a performer relates a narrative to an audience. The operatic text is infused with numerous texts, namely the libretto, music, drama, and the visual in the form of properties on the stage, costumes, etc. All of these texts are encoded and consequently needs to be decoded by means of interpretation. When the work/opera is “activated through the act of being read, told, exhibited and interpreted” (Viljoen, 2007:40), it undergoes a metamorphosis to become a text, which is “radically symbolic” (Barthes, 1977a:159). The text and, more so, the narrative text is consequently encoded with certain elements, such as time and space. These encoded elements, thus, need to be analysed and interpreted by decoding the sign systems found in the text.

3.4 Sign systems

The study of signs and sign systems fall within the realm of semiotics, which can be defined as the study of signs or the study of meaning. Saussure (1959:16) defined a sign system, with relation to language, as follows: “Language is a *system of signs that express ideas*, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet for deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc.” (Saussure, 1959:16, own italics added). Thus, as humans, we communicate ideas by means of signs that are understood by one another. Berghoff (1998:520) pointed out that sign systems, such as “art, music, drama, mathematics, and language are communication systems. We use them to construct and express meaning. These systems resemble language in that each comprises forms of representation and conventions” (Berghoff, 1998:520). A sign system is, thus, a ‘language’, which is employed to communicate ideas. Signs mediate between an addresser (sender) and an addressee (receiver). An addresser will *send* an encoded message, which contains *perceptible signs*, to an addressee, who constructs the *meaning of the sent sign*.

The addressee perceives the sign in its inherent symbolic state and decodes the sign according to his or her personal, accumulated knowledge (Berghoff, 1998:520).

In an opera, verbal and non-verbal sign systems are employed to communicate ideas to the addressee as well. Verbal sign systems comprise of the sung libretto, when it is activated by the act of singing. The orchestra has an ability to communicate ideas to the addressee as well however this is a non-verbal sign system. The orchestra communicates ideas to the addressee. This, in turn, is accomplished by the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*,³⁰ which points to the orchestra's ability to *speak* however it *should not* be confused with a verbal sign system. An orchestra's ability to *speak* and *communicate* ideas to an addressee was described by Wagner (1827:217) as follows: "[T]he orchestra has an undeniable *speaking ability*, and through the creation of our modern instrumental music have we uncovered this" (own italics added)³¹. The actants, which are portrayed by the orchestra in *Saartjie*, not only aid in the construction of context in the text but also function on the connotative and signifying level as a sign system. Furthermore, the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen* is encoded in the musical text through the composer's implicit knowledge, which he brought to the compositional process and is manifested in the final score (see 3.4.1, Figure 2). Additionally, the non-verbal sign systems include actants, leitmotifs, facial expressions, gestures, clothing and costumes, make-up, and the physical depiction of the space the opera takes place in (see 3.3.3). With this knowledge, the processes of encoding and decoding in a text can be dealt with.

3.4.1 Encoding

"The Text is radically symbolic: a work conceived, perceived and received in its integrally symbolic nature is a text" (Barthes, 1977:159), which means it needs to be decoded and interpreted, otherwise it would remain a *work*. The work is encoded by employing linguistic (verbal) or non-linguistic (non-verbal) signs.

Jakobson (1960:353) proposed a model of communication between persons, which moves beyond the basic transmission models proposed by earlier linguists (see Saussure, 1959:11–12), which was basically a two-track communication model. Jakobson's model emphasises the importance of codes and social context (ideological zeitgeist)³² in communication. Jakobson (1960:353) explained his communication model (see Figure 2) as follows: an addresser will send a message to an addressee. For the message to be understood and operational, it would require "a context referred to", which is understood by the addressee. A code – which is understandable, either in full "or at least in part" by both the addresser and addressee, is employed – and finally a contact – which is a "physical channel and psychological connection between the addresser

³⁰ Throughout this dissertation, I will use *Sprachvermögen* as a verb when referring to the orchestra's *speaking ability*, in order to keep with Wagner's original designation of the concept, when referring to the orchestra's ability to communicate ideas to the audience.

³¹ "Das Orchester besitzt unleugbar ein Sprachvermögen, und die Schöpfungen unserer modernen Instrumentalmusik haben uns dies aufgedeckt."

³² In this study *ideological zeitgeist* and *social context* are used and should be understood as interchangeable synonyms.

and addressee” – enables them to stay in communication. Jakobson’s model procures its premise and application from linguistics however it does not consider the role and intentions of the composer in the communication process.

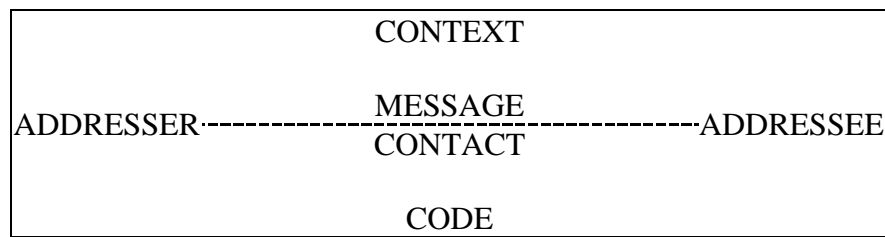


Figure 2: Jakobson’s model of communication (Jakobson, 1960:353)

However, Kendall and Carterette (1990:131) believed that the composer’s intentions are encoded from a cognitively perceived idea and re-encoded into musical code by means of a physical manifestation in the form of sheet music (Figure 3). The performer re-encodes the encoded musical codes as found in the sheet music by means of interpreting and performing it as an acoustical code, which, in turn, is recoded by the listener in the form of the listener’s ideas. A continuous communication takes place as the composer, performer, and listener each bring their own explicit and implicit knowledge to the performance. Each creates and interprets the performance in his own context from the musical communication.

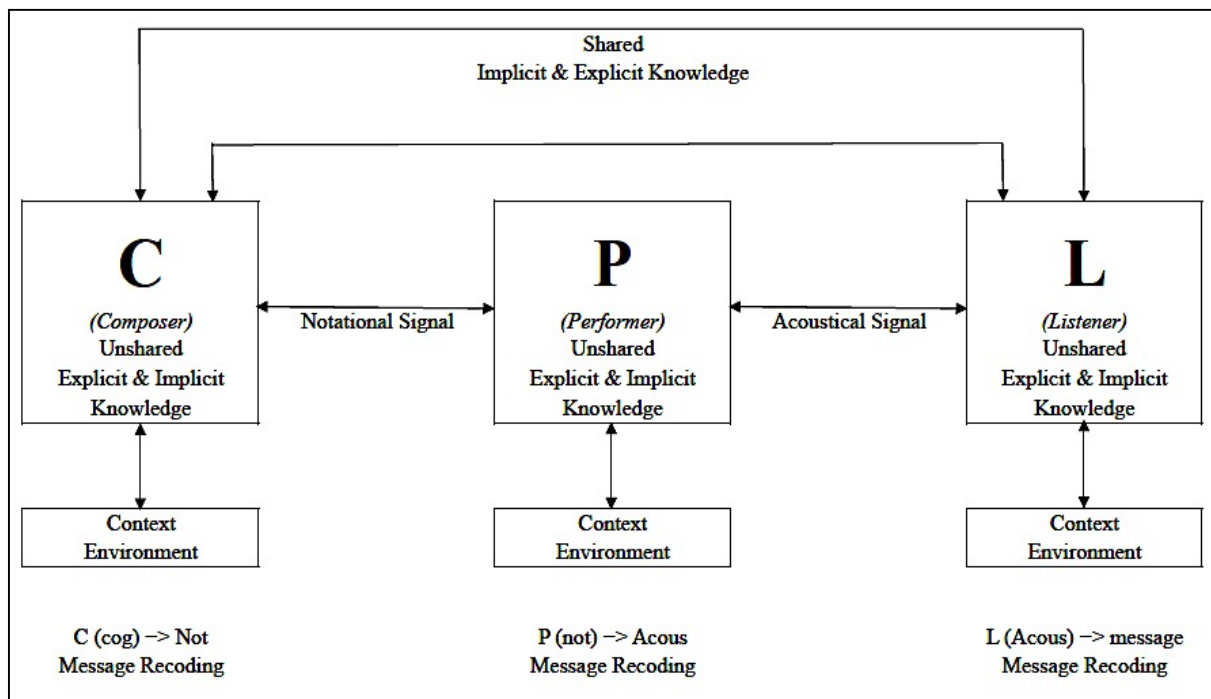


Figure 3: Kendall and Carterette’s model of musical communication among composer, performer, and listener (Kendall & Carterette, 1990:132)

With the aforementioned in mind, we can now move to the study of signs and how they are decoded by means of semiotics. Fludernik (2009:102) distinguished and classified three types of signs, which are employed by the addresser by means of encoding: *deictic signs*, *iconic signs*, and *symbolic (arbitrary) signs*.

Deictic signs are directional, by means of words and gestures (e.g. pointing toward someone or an object pointing in a direction – Everaert-Desmedt (2011:194) used the example of a weathervane on top of a building that indicates the direction the wind is blowing. The weathervane’s direction is caused by the wind thus the weathervane becomes an index of the wind’s direction). The iconic sign (or *signifier*) most often resemble that which they stand for (*signified*). A drawing of a glass on a crate filled with fragile goods signifies that the contents of the crate inside is fragile and should be handled with care; ergo, the drawing of the glass becomes an “iconic portrayal of a species (a glass) that is part of a genera (fragile objects)”, as pointed out by Everaert-Desmedt (2011:195). Lastly, the symbolic (or arbitrary) sign is representative – it shares no likeness to the represented nor is it in any way similar or the same thus, in most cases, the meaning has to be learned.

3.4.2 Decoding

The concept of decoding falls within the field of semiotics. A concise and succinct definition of semiotics (or semiology) is furnished by Hébert (2014), as an academic and scientific field of study that rests upon the study of signs and signification (the process of interpreting or decoding signs). Two theorists, Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce are regarded as seminal figures in the field. Many other scholars, such as Hjelmslev (1943), Barthes (1977b), Greimas (1983), Jakobson (1966–1988), Morris (1971), and Eco (1976), have also made contributions to defining the field.

Martin and Ringham (2000:7–8) predicated four opinions with regards to semeiotic analyses and decoding a text. Firstly, an object/text cannot signify on its own accord; meaning has to be ascribed to the said object by a proficient observer. I have to point out that the meaning, which is attached to the object, is a somewhat subjective one. Martin and Ringham (2000:7) highlighted an example: when confronted with an unknown object from another culture, we are unable to understand its meaning or purpose but when one is “left alone with it, we will give it a meaning that is based on what [*a priori*] knowledge we have and what will suit our purpose”. We would go about ascribing a meaning or purpose to this object, by employing hermeneutics of suspicion and other endeavours to uncover the ideas which have not been examined yet, but which the object may rely upon (Culler, 1997:68).

The second argument offered by Martin and Ringham (2000:7–8) explained that semiotics views a text as an independent and internally articulate unit. Rather than employing ideas, which fall outside the text, a semiotic analysis of a text decodes the internal use of language and the structures of that particular text, pointing out how meaning is constructed in the text and what the meaning of the text is. The third argument pointed to the narrativity that underlies all discourse, not only what is considered as a story but also what is in keeping with Derrida’s argument (as pointed out in 3.2), everything can be considered a text or story, which needs to be interpreted. Lastly, “a text must, therefore, be studied at these different levels of depth and not just at the surface level as is the case with traditional linguistics” (Martin & Ringham, 2000:8).

For the purpose of this study, the text and sign systems will be approached and discussed from the point of view put forward by Peirce. The reason for this is that Saussure's system is quite objective and did not acknowledge any human cognitive or psychological meaning-making procedures, apart from the cognitivist action of relating the sound-image or signifier to the signified. Saussure "treats language as a pure system of laws governing all phonetic, grammatical, and lexical forms that confront individual speakers as inviolable norms over which they have no control" (Holquist, 2002:41). Human experience is not accounted for in Saussure's theory of signs and language is regarded as a mere abstract system of signs.

With the study at hand, I deem Peirce's detailed approach of signs and sign theory as the best option for analysing the sign systems found in *Saartjie*. Peirce's sign theory focuses on the sign as a triadic relation between *representamen*, *object*, and its resultant *interpretant* (being the sign's more or less clarified meaning). Peirce's sign theory allows for external factors – such as context, human feelings, and the like – as opposed to Saussure's theory, which views signs and sign systems in isolation.

Peirce developed his theory of semiotics over the course of his lifetime and with subsequent revisions by himself. Peirce's philosophy regarding signs can be divided in three broad periods, an early account in the 1860s, an interim account (which come across very neatly delineated during the 1880s and 1890s that he presented in 1903), and the final account, which he developed between 1906 and 1910 (Atkin, 2013).

Peirce's first attempt at an account of signs came from a paper he read in 1867 at the seventh *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* and subsequently published the paper 1868 (Ransdell, 1998). Peirce's paper entitled *On a new list of categories* laid the foundation for his sign theory and the basic trichotomy emerged: "any sign, or representation as Peirce called it at this early stage, will have a sign-vehicle, an object, and an interpretant (Atkin, 2013). The second revision to Peirce's theory of semiotics came about when he presented a series of lectures at Harvard University and the Lowell Institute. During this time, Peirce's theory about signs expanded to include ten classes of signs as opposed to only three (see Figure 5). Peirce's 1903 account included more types of signs "within the focus of philosophy and logic" (Atkin, 2013). This was the last major revision of Peirce's philosophical output concerned semiotics and he developed his theory of signs beyond his previous theories. He introduced and clearly defined his theory about Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, as seen in his correspondence with Lady Victoria Welby (Atkin, 2013).

According to Peirce (1932:135),

A sign, or *representamen*, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the *ground* of the representamen.

The sign is triadic in nature and comprises, in the most basic terms, of a *sign*, *interpretant*, and *object*, as seen in Figure 4. For the sake of this discussion, I would like to present an outline, as found in Everaert-Desmedt (2011:197), of Peirce’s semiotic theory, which consists of three points: first, his theory takes into consideration the psychological and intellectual processes. Furthermore, his theory expands the concept of what the sign is and how it functions. Peirce’s semiotics is, secondly, founded upon a philosophical triad of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness, which brings the three concepts of three terms in relation to one another, namely “the sign or representamen, the object and the interpretant” (Everaert-Desmedt, 2011:197). Lastly, Peirce’s semiotics takes into consideration the effect the sign exercises upon the interpreter; moreover, it also takes the context in which the signs are produced and interpreted.

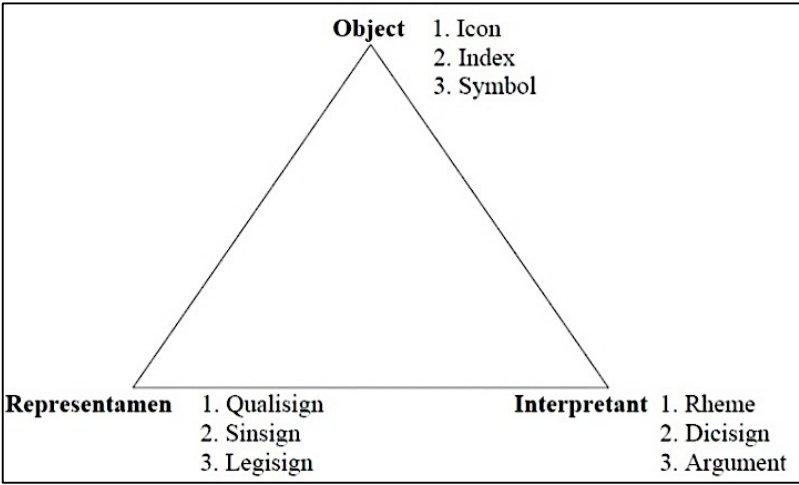


Figure 4: Peirce’s semiotic triangle (adapted from Everaert-Desmedt, 2011:197)

Cumming (2014) summarises Peirce’s definition as follow: the sign is an article, which embodies the capacity to represent – hence the name *representamen* (see Figure 4). The *object* is the idea, which is conveyed by said article, and it may or may not be a concrete article. The *interpretant*, which is the more or less clarified meaning of the article, and links the sign and interpretant to one another. Table 3-1 offers a brief summary of Peirce’s sign theory.

Table 3-1: Summary of Peirce’s triadic sign theory

Trichotomy:	I. of the <i>representamen</i>		II. of relation to the <i>object</i>		III. of relation to the <i>interpretant</i>
Sign’s phenomenological category:	Firstness is exemplified in every quality of a total feeling. It is perfectly simple and without parts; and everything has its quality (Peirce, 1904).		Secondness is a brute action: “one thing acting upon another ... the action of a new feeling in destroying the old feeling” (Peirce, 1904).		“ Thirdness is the mode of being of that which is such as it is, in bringing a second and third into relation to each other” (Peirce, 1904).
The sign itself:	Qualisign: “mere quality of an appearance” (Peirce, 1904).		Sinsign: “a specific spatio-temporal thing or event that functions like a sign” (Everaert-Desmedt, 2011:194).		Legisign: consists of a norm, law, or habit, it is also a representational relation (Everaert-Desmedt, 2011:194).
The sign denoting its object	Icon: resembles or imitates its object, for example a painting or sculpture. Deledalle (2000:124) stated that Peirce subdivides the hypoicon into three categories: Firstness, ‘feeling’ the image; Secondness, which bears on action, a “diagram is drawn, not just thought”; and Thirdness, the metaphor, which represents the representative character of the representamen, by means of a parallelism in something else.	OR	Index: “The index asserts nothing; it only says “There!” It takes hold of our eyes, as it were, and forcibly directs them to a particular object, and there it stops. Demonstrative and relative pronouns are nearly pure indices, because they denote things without describing them; so are the letters on a geometrical diagram, and the subscript numbers which in algebra distinguish one value from another without saying what those values are” (Peirce, 1885:181).	OR	Symbol: denotes the object solely by virtue of the fact that it would be interpreted to do just that; the symbol denotes by virtue of its interpretant. The symbol, like the legisign, needs an actual <i>replica</i> or <i>instance</i> for expression. It is “formulated <i>a priori</i> by convention or <i>a posteriori</i> by cultural habit” (Everaert-Desmedt, 2011:195).
The sign represented in the interpretant of denoting its object	Rheme: “A rheme is defined as a sign which is represented in its signified interpretant as <i>if it were</i> a character or mark (or as being so)” (Peirce, 1904). According to Deledalle (2000:141), the rheme cannot be true or false – “ <i>the object is what is produced by truth</i> (which, in the long run, will be reality).”		Dicent sign: represents its object by means of an actual existence. The dicensign separately indicates its object as a subject of the predicate. The dicensign “is intended to have some compulsive effect on the interpreter of it” (Peirce, 1906:507).		Argument: represents its object in respect of a habit or law. The argument represents “a process of change in thoughts or signs as if to induce this change in the Interpreter” (Peirce, 1906:507).

From Table 3-1, ten classes of signs can be deduced, according to Peirce (1998:289–299), as set out below in Figure 5. The boldface is Peirce’s own indications and shows the non-redundant specifications. Further to this, two observations have to be made: (1) any two adjacent cells share two common aspects (separated by a thin line: 1, 5, 8, and 10), and (2) cells separated by a thick line share only one common aspect (2, 6, 9, 3, and 7).

1. Rhematic <i>Iconic</i> Qualisign “a feeling of red”	5. Rhematic <i>Iconic</i> Legisign “a diagram [type]”	8. Rhematic Symbolic Legisign “a common noun”	10. Argument Symbolic Legisign “an argument”
2. Rhematic <i>Iconic</i> Sinsign “an individual diagram”	6. Rhematic Indexical Legisign “a demonstrative pronoun”	9. Dicent Symbol Legisign “ordinary proposition”	
3. Rhematic Indexical Sinsign “a spontaneous cry”		7. Dicent Indexical Legisign “a street cry”	
4. Dicent Indexical Sinsign “a weathercock”			

Figure 5: Peirce’s 10 classes of signs from MS 540.17 (Peirce, 1998:289–299)

The ten classes of signs, as shown in Figure 5, are employed in Chapter 4. Furthermore, the interpretation and how these classes of signs pertain to the text are also explored in the following chapter.

3.5 Context

The meaning and interpretation of a text is determined by context, as Culler (1997:67) pointed out: context comprises the precepts of language, the temporality and spatiality of both the author³³ and reader, and other factors, which may be deemed relevant and important in the understanding of the text. These views are echoed and expanded in both Viljoen (2012) and Schmid (2010).

The concept of context embraces social, temporal, and spatial dimensions; furthermore, social identity is infused with cultural and historical contexts – both in which conceptual contexts are immersed and intimately amalgamated (see Viljoen, 2012:1). To construct context, an event needs time, space, and, more

³³ In this dissertation, *author* should be understood as a broad-based term, which includes the composer and librettist, in terms of musical compositions.

than often, an ideological zeitgeist in which to take place.³⁴ *Saartjie* is placed in a complex ideological zeitgeist: in France during the nineteenth century “social, cultural, and political upheavals in this era resulted in an emerging need for a more concrete national identity” (Mitchell, 2010:32). Displaying Saartjie Baartman both in life and death served a two-fold purpose. Saartjie’s live shows, “literature, theater, art, and other cultural venues provided an access point for the French bourgeoisie to contemplate and know the black Other. Any sexual titillation would not be the viewer’s fault – after all, there she was, almost naked.” (Mitchell, 2010:34) Her death was used as a scientific tool for Cuvier to prove the French nation’s superiority when compared to other races, through comparative anatomy. Scully and Crais (2008:323) argues that Saartjie’s body became an ethnographic sample and truth in the eyes of the English and more so the French and rather than acknowledging her as a human being; the *Hottentot Venus*, which was an act, became to be seen as the *real* Saartjie Baartman. These elements (temporality, spatiality, and ideological zeitgeist) are all manipulated or treated in the *syuzhet*, which includes ordering of events and how long each of these events last. These manipulations evolve to become the story that is infused with temporal and spatial focalisations.

Schmid (2010:15–16) defined four possible meanings for the concept of *context*. Firstly, the general norms and values (ideology) of an author’s time or the period of time depicted in the work (temporal and spatial elements) – “literary works provide, more or less overtly, information about the norms and values in terms of which their eventfulness should be understood” (Schmid, 2010:15). Secondly, context can be narrowed down to include the general conventions and principles that are ascribed to the events that are portrayed in the narrative, as well as the situations the characters find themselves in (Schmid, 2010:15). In the third instance, “genres and movements are characterized by certain concepts of what is eventful” (Schmid, 2010:15–16). As time progresses, succeeding generations ascribe different meanings to events and what they deem to be important. As a result of this, a reader may choose to interpret a text against the original temporal and spatial milieu or choose to interpret the text in his own current temporal and spatial situation, ascribing a different context to the narrative. Lastly, Schmid (2010:16) deemed intertextual context as equally important as the previous three definitions. Well-read readers are not surprised by eventfulness or situations that may come as a surprise to the character because the well-read reader has been prepared by pretexts. Schmid (2010:16) provides an example of this eventfulness and pretexts from Pushkin’s novella *The Stationmaster*: the pretexts refer to other tragic heroines in Russian sentimental literature whom have been seduced by noblemen and these tragic heroines eventually end their lives. Another contradictory, intertextual pretext in Pushkin’s novella is the four illustrations of the generosity of the father in the biblical parable of the prodigal son who returns home, which adorns the stationmaster’s modest room. In the novella, the daughter is not the prodigal but rather the father who does not patiently wait for his daughter’s return – the father becomes an alcoholic and drinks himself to death. The surprising eventfulness lays in

³⁴ The concepts of time (temporality) and space (spatiality) have already been discussed in 3.3.2 and 3.3.3 respectively.

the twist of fate that the stationmaster's daughter makes her fortune and does not commit suicide, unlike the other tragic heroines in Russian sentimental literature.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the concept of *text* was explored and explained, as per the poststructuralist Barthesian and Derridaen explanation of what constitutes a text. A text is, consequently, not a static entity but present everywhere, as everything that happens around and to us can be interpreted by means of decoding. The text, therefore, becomes *alive* through the process of decoding and new interpretations arise. The discussion was expanded to include narrative text and how this concept pertains to opera in this research project. The importance of the *syuzhet*, as the plot of the story on the stage, and the *fabula*, as the raw materials from which the story has been imagined, was discussed and the way in which they relate to *Saartjie* is discussed throughout the ensuing chapter.

Furthermore, sign systems, as well as the processes of encoding and decoding involved in these sign systems, were discussed. Kendall and Carterette's model of musical communication among the composer, performer, and listener (see Figure 2) provides not only a concise representation of the processes of encoding and decoding but also how the work mutates from physical sheet music to become a text. An understanding of the process of decoding, by means of Peirce's theory of semiotics, points out how signs in a text may be interpreted. Peirce's theory of semiotics also considers the particular effect a sign may have on a person, a point that is especially helpful in this dissertation and aids in the understanding of context in *Saartjie*. Culler (1997:67) pointed out that "meaning is context-bound, but context is always boundless, always open to mutations under the pressure of theoretical discussions". Context is a wide-reaching concept, which includes, but is not limited to, temporality, spatiality, and intertextuality. These concepts all have bearing on how context is construed in a text and in further refinement of the hermeneutic approach of this qualitative study, the concepts in this chapter are employed especially in Chapter 4 while dealing with the close reading of the text.

CHAPTER 4: CLOSE READING OF SAARTJIE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the close reading of the text. The chapter begins by providing a synopsis of the opera; a brief biography of Sara Baartman's life is offered to orientate the reader to the main events in the opera. From the brief biography, *Saartjie's syuzhet* and *fabula* can be understood. The importance of the signs found in the text are discussed through an application of Peirce's semiotic theory. Further to this, the leitmotifs found throughout the text are pointed out and discussed before the commencement of the close reading of the text. The close reading is approached in the following fashion: I discuss the text in a three-fold manner, starting with the libretto,³⁵ followed by the music, and thirdly the visual signs associated in respect to the relevant section under discussion. Some preliminary conclusions are drawn at the end of this chapter.

4.2 Synopsis

The opera takes place on New Year's Eve, 1815, in Saartjie Baartman's apartment in Paris. A silver metal cube depicts Saartjie's apartment and, for the duration of the opera, she remains inside the cube. The cube can be likened to a glass case in which an exhibit would be placed. Saartjie comes home after another night of exhibiting herself as *La Vénus Hottentote* (The Venus Hottentot). Saartjie contemplates her current situation and is determined to tell her handler, Rëaux, that she is no longer willing to be treated like an animal and that the show must come to an end. Saartjie thinks of her situation – not only as a human exhibit to members of the public but also how she had to be drawn in the nude by the artists, while furthermore being examined by the scientists at the *Jardin du Roi*. A group of French citizens, singing a song about her and her unique physique, suddenly interrupt Saartjie's trail of thought. Saartjie settles down as the onlookers walk past and she recalls her past, back home in South Africa, by the Gamtoos River, as well as the time she spent with her 'Bavarian drummer boy', Daniel.³⁶ She consoles herself with the first of three songs, the first of which is *Al lê die berge nog so blou* (The distant blue mountains), the second is the Nguni lullaby *Thula Thu*, and the third, a Khoisan prayer *O! Gurutse!* Saartjie's reverie-like aria is suddenly interrupted again by the crowd passing by, while singing *La Marseillaise* (the French national anthem). Once the ensemble is finished singing, Saartjie sings the second aria *Thula thu*, a Nguni lullaby, as she cradles her cloak, as if it was a child. After this, Saartjie falls asleep, only to be awakened by the French, as midnight and the New Year arrives. As the sound of canon fire and fireworks erupt in the background, Saartjie sleepily sings the last aria, a Khoisan prayer, *O Gurutse* (Oh Gurub, Son of the Thundercloud), which she remembers from her childhood. In the background, the *Voices of the Ancients* calls Saartjie 'home' to rest

³⁵ Refer to Appendix A for the libretto of *Saartjie*.

³⁶ Saartjie Baartman's lover from the Cape was a Bavarian drummer, Hendrik de Jongh, but his name was changed to Daniel in the libretto to avoid confusion with Hendrik Cesars, who employed Saartjie in the Cape and later handed her over to Rëaux.

among her own people. In Saartjie’s feverish delirium, she answers and dies quietly and alone in her Parisian apartment.

According to Hofmeyr (2014), the orchestration was somewhat ‘proscribed’ and substitutions of instruments were not allowed – the composers could however use fewer instruments than the prescribed instruments, but not any additional instruments. *Saartjie* is scored for the following musical instruments³⁷ and singers:

- Woodwinds: Flute doubling piccolo, oboe doubling cor anglais, clarinet in A doubling bass clarinet in B-flat, bassoon doubling contrabassoon.
- Brass: 2 horns in F, trumpet in C, trombone in C, trombone with F-key.
- Drums: 4 timpani doubling triangle.
- Percussion: (3 players): snare drum, field/tenor drum, bass drum, triangle, suspended plate, large tam-tam, tubular bells, Chinese wooden blocks, maracas, glass chimes, marimba, vibraphone.
- Singers: Saartjie (soprano)³⁸ and SATB chorus.³⁹
- Strings: 3 Violin I, 3 Violin II, 3 viola, 2 violoncello, and 2 contrabass (second contrabass with 5 strings).⁴⁰

4.3 Saartjie Baartman (ca. 1777–1815): a brief biography

The biography is divided in three sections, following three key epochs in Saartjie’s life: her time in the Cape, the four years she spent in London and England, and her final months in Paris. Due to the scope and focus of this dissertation, I shall limit my discussion of Saartjie Baartman’s life to the minimum. The main sources that I have consulted throughout my research for this study contains many more details and archival references.⁴¹

4.3.1 Eastern Cape and Cape Town (ca. 1777–1810)

Most of Sara Baartman’s (Saartjie) early life is shrouded in mystery, as historical records are not very clear

³⁷ In the accompanying DVD, the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra is conducted by Kamal Kahn.

³⁸ In the accompanying DVD, Saartjie’s role is interpreted by Siphamandla Yakupa.

³⁹ In the accompanying DVD, the chorus is made up of the UCT Opera School Chorus and members of Voice of the Nation Studio under the direction of chorus master and musical assistant Alexander Fokkens.

⁴⁰ The string section is divided into groups and the numbers refer to groups, not the number of individual instruments.

⁴¹ Crais & Scully (2008): *Race and Erasure: Sara Baartman and Hendrik Cesars in Cape Town and London*; Crais & Scully (2009): *Sara Baartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography*; Kechiche (2010): *Black Venus*: a film by Abdellatif Kechiche; Kirby (1949): *The Hottentot Venus*; Kirby (1954a): *The ‘Hottentot Venus’ of the Musée de l’Homme, Paris*; Kirby (1954b): *A Further Note on the “Hottentot Venus”*.

concerning her early life in South Africa. Research by Crais and Scully (2009:7) pointed out that Saartjie was born approximately 50 miles (80 kilometres) north of the Gamtoos Valley in the Eastern Cape and not in the Gamtoos Valley, as was generally believed. Saartjie never knew her mother, as she passed away before Saartjie's first birthday⁴² (Jolly & Moojen, 1810). While her exact date of birth is unknown, extensive research by the scholars Scully and Crais (2008:306) point to a possible date of birth that is more than ten years before the commonly accepted 1789. Scully and Crais (2008:306) pointed out the improbability of 1789 as the year in which Saartjie was born by explaining that Saartjie gave birth to a child around 1796, which implies that she would have been a mere seven years old. Therefore, according to their research, Saartjie's year of birth was more likely to be around 1777.

David Fourie, a settler and descendant of the French Huguenots, was granted a piece of land by the Cape government, approximately 600 acres in size. This piece of land is also very likely where Saartjie Baartman's family lived and that Fourie named his farm Baartman's Fonteyn (Crais & Scully, 2009:10-18). Fourie passed away in 1779, and Saartjie and her immediate family were relocated to Cornelius Muller's farms (Crais & Scully, 2009:21). Muller sold Saartjie in 1795 or 1796 to a Cape Town trader, Pieter Cesars, who was in the employment of the butcher, Jan Michiel Elzer (Crais & Scully, 2009:24). Saartjie arrived in Cape Town around 1797 to work as a domestic servant in the household of Elzer. In 1799, Elzer passed away and, in 1800, Saartjie moved to the household of Pieter Cesars (Scully & Crais, 2008:307-308; Crais & Scully, 2009:19-39).

Around 1803, Saartjie moved to the household of Hendrik Cesars, Pieter Cesars' brother. Saartjie worked in the household of Hendrik Cesars and Anna Catharina Staal in the neighbourhood then called Papendorp, today known as Woodstock. Saartjie lived in Cape Town for roughly fifteen years before departing to England in her thirties. Saartjie bore three children, who all died in their infancy without their names being recorded. The fathers of the children were a Khoekhoe man (a slave of Hendrik Cesars) and Hendrik de Jongh (a drummer from Batavia). Hendrik de Jongh moved from Cape Town to Hout Bay and Saartjie visited him regularly. They lived together for a few years before Hendrik left in 1806, when the British took over the Cape Colony. After this, Saartjie's life became intimately entwined with those of the Cesars. Hendrik Cesars and Alexander Dunlop's planned to exhibit and earn money from Saartjie's unique attributes, probably stemmed from Saartjie visiting and displaying her body to the sailors – whether out of her own initiative or Cesar's demands – at the hospital⁴³, where Dunlop worked in Cape Town (Scully & Crais, 2008:312).

Scully and Crais (2008:307) are of the opinion that, by the time of Saartjie's childhood, the Dutch settlers shattered whatever independence the Gonaqua's still may have had. The Gonaqua servants learned to speak

⁴² See Examination, Saartje Baartman, *King's Bench*, KB 1/36/4, f. 117 (27 Nov 1810).

⁴³ Scully and Crais (2008:309) states that the Dutch East India Company established the slave lodge in the seventeenth century to house company slaves and, under British rule, it was also used as a hospital.

Dutch from the Dutch settlers who employed them. Saartjie would have, thus, learned *some* of her people's customs and fragments of their language during the time she and some of the members of the Gonaquas lived together as servants in the employment of the Dutch settlers.



Plate 1:

F.C. Lewis, 1810. *Sartjee, the Hottentot Venus*. "London published as the Act directs Sept. 18. 1810. by Hendrik Cezar."; [inscription in pencil between title and publication line] "*Exhibited in London in 1810.*" Aquatint with etching, printed in brown ink on paper, 35.7cm x 22.1 cm. 1917,1208.3712. Trustees of the British Museum, London.



Plate 2:

F.C. Lewis, 1811. *Sartjee, the Hottentot Venus. Exhibiting at No. 225, Piccadilly.* Lewis Delin. et. Sculp. London. Published as the act directs March 14th, 1811, by S. Baartman, 225 Piccadilly. Aquatint with etching on paper, no dimensions stated. C.103.k. British Library.

4.3.2 England (1810–1814)

In March, 1810, Saartjie, along with Hendrik Cesars and Alexander Dunlop, boarded the HMS Diadem and set sail for England and arrived there in June, 1810. Dunlop saw an opportunity to exhibit Saartjie and profit from the situation. A contract was drawn up between Dunlop, Cesars, and Saartjie. While all the finer details in the contract are not known, it did state that Cesars would be in Dunlop's employment. Nonetheless, the details of what Saartjie and Cesar's remunerations would have been is not known (Crais & Scully, 2009:50–58).

According to Scully and Crais (2008:317–8), the famous aquatints of Saartjie Baartman by Frederick Christian Lewis Snr (1779–1856)⁴⁴ were produced in September 1810 and March 1811 respectively. Lewis was a renowned painter, etcher, aquatint and stipple engraver, and studied at the Royal Academy schools. Lewis' works in John Chamberlaine's *Original designs of the most celebrated masters of the Bolognese, Roman, Florentine and Venetian Schools ... in his Majesty's Collection* (published in 1812) further added to his fame (Scully & Crais, 2008:317; Royal Collection Trust, 2015).

In the first aquatint (see Plate 1), Saartjie is shown standing alone, almost naked, with her buttocks occupying the centre of the image. A *kaross*⁴⁵ is draped over her shoulder although her breast is exposed and she holds a staff in her hand, while smoking her pipe. Her cheeks are decorated with thick black stripes to resemble the eland, where the stripes are more brazen than the early Gonaqua would have applied. Her shoes are not traditional and most probably purchased in England. The subtitle reads as follow: *Saartjee, the Hottentot Venus. / Now exhibiting in London. / Drawn from real life*. This image measures 14 by 9 inches (35.5 by 22.8 cm) and was posted outside 225 Piccadilly, where Saartjie exhibited herself to the public for a fee, which was collected at the door (Scully & Crais, 2008:317–8). The second aquatint (see Plate 2) dates from March 1811. In this aquatint, Saartjie faces the viewer wearing a tight body stocking, a *kaross* over her shoulders, various ostrich shell fragments, and tortoise shell pendants. Behind her is a *ramkie*⁴⁶ leaning against a chair. Saartjie still bears the face paint of an eland's stripes. The shoes are clearly not of the traditional type worn by indigenous people of South Africa (see Plate 1 and Plate 2). According to McEvansoneya (2013:27), Saartjie was furnished with a new costume, "to which beads and other ornaments were added, and 'tribal' make up was applied to Baartman's face." Saartjie presumably used this updated costume during her tours, to places such as Bath, Bury St. Edmunds, and Liverpool, during the years 1811–1812 (McEvansoneya, 2013:27). These two aquatints are two of the most widely found images of Saartjie in existence (Scully & Crais, 2008:317–318).

⁴⁴ Not to be confused with his son, Frederick Christian Lewis, the younger, (1813–75) (Royal Academy of Arts Collection, 2015).

⁴⁵ An animal skin traditionally worn by African people.

⁴⁶ "A guitar-like instrument, formerly played by the Khoekhoe peoples of South Africa, consisting of three or four strings stretched out along a board, at one end of which is a gourd resonator on which the bridge is placed" (OED, 2016).

A letter in the *Morning Chronicle*, dated 12 October, 1810, authored by ‘an Englishman’ asseverated that “[t]his poor female is made to walk, to dance, to shew herself, not for her own advantage but for the profit of her master, who, when she appeared tired holds up *a stick to her, like the wild beast keepers*, to intimidate her into obedience” (Anon, 1998:97–98). It is believed that a member of the abolitionists, or the African Institution, an organization against slavery in London, may have written this letter (Crais & Scully, 2009:89). An investigation ensued and a court case, during October and November in 1810, drew the attention of the public to the Hottentot Venus. During the court case, it was determined that Saartjie was to be interviewed. This interview was conducted in Dutch, as nobody could speak Saartjie’s Khoekhoe native language. Accompanied by the Coroner of the Court and a notary, Jolly and Moojen (1810) conducted the interview with Saartjie on 27 November, 1810. The court case was not to determine whether public indecency took place but rather whether Saartjie was a slave (Scully & Crais, 2008:320). The court eventually ruled that Saartjie was not a slave, that her participation in the shows was based on her own free will, and that she shared in the profits generated from the sales of the aquatints and the shows (Crais & Scully, 2009:93–101). According to McEvansoneya (2013:27), Saartjie left London during the April of 1811 and toured the English provinces and, during this time, Saartjie was also baptised with the anglicised name *Sara Baartman* in Manchester Cathedral on 1 December, 1811, by Joshua Brookes (Crais & Scully, 2009:107). Saartjie was also briefly exhibited in Limerick, Ireland, during February, 1812, and shortly afterwards in Dublin (McEvansoneya, 2013:27). Not much is known about Saartjie’s whereabouts after this period and until she arrived in Paris.

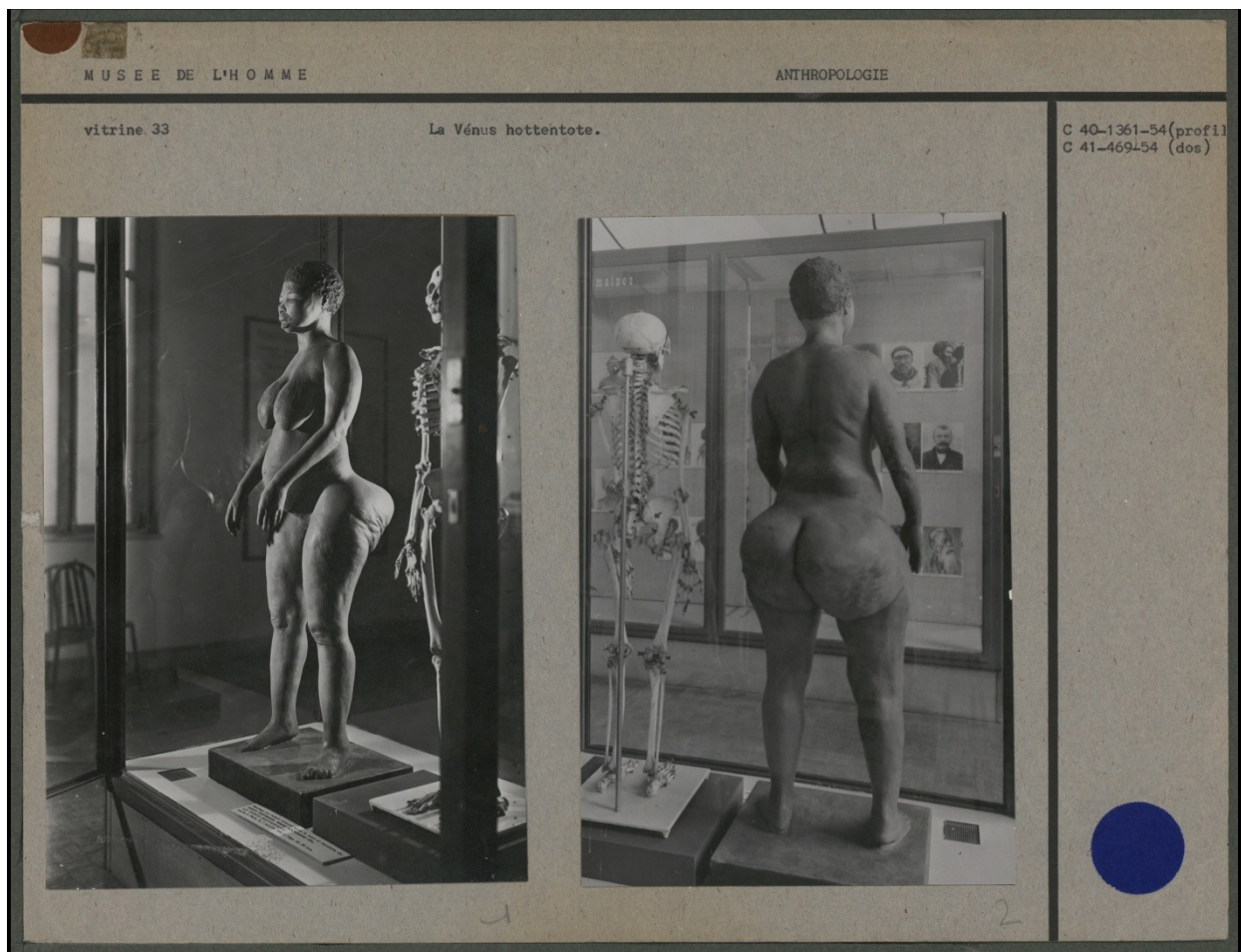


Plate 3:

Henri Tracol. c.1940. *La Vénus Hottentote*. *Vue du moulage de Saartjie Baartman, appelée la "Vénus Hottentote", vitrine no. 33 du Musée de l'Homme*. Photographs mounted on board. Left photograph: 11.7 x 16.4 cm, right photograph: 10.5 x 16.4 cm, mounting dimensions: 22.5 x 29.5 cm. PP0101027.1 and PP0101027.2. Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris.

4.3.3 Paris (1814–1815)

Saartjie arrived in Paris during September, 1814, accompanied by Henry Taylor. Taylor described Saartjie not as Griqua but rather as Houswana – an even more primitive race than the Gonaquas from whom Saartjie stemmed (Crais & Scully, 2009:113, 117). It is quite possible that Taylor may have borne some knowledge of Le Vaillant’s writings about his travels in Southern Africa and used this as another ‘selling’ point concerning Saartjie (Crais & Scully, 2009:123–124).

In Paris (January 1815), Saartjie changed owners when she was sold to a handler of wild animals, S. Rèaux.⁴⁷ “In the spring of 1815, having been taken to the *Jardin du Roi* [today *Jardin des Plantes*], she had the complaisance to slough off her clothes and to be painted from the nude” (Cuvier, 1817:4).⁴⁸ Plates 8 and 9 were prepared by the artist C. de Last – probably during Saartjie’s exhibition at the *Jardin du Roi*. In this particular monograph,⁴⁹ Cuvier and Saint-Hillaire shows Saartjie as the first entry with a report by Cuvier himself. Saartjie was thus even ‘captured’ in a book (see footnote 44), apart from being displayed as a museum object after her death (see Plate 3). Saartjie’s genitals were preserved in glass jars as well, and Cuvier had “the honour to present to the [French] *Académie* the genitals of this woman which I [Cuvier] have prepared in order to leave no doubt about the nature of her apron” (Cuvier, 1817:266).^{50, 51}

Crais and Scully (2009:122) expressed the following about Saartjie’s lodgings and her working conditions during her time in Paris: she lived inside the Palais-Royal in a small upstairs apartment, at no. 15 rue Neuves des Petites-Champs. She worked for ten hours a day: from eleven in the morning until nine at night. Further to this, during her working hours, she suffered the stares and prodding of the public. Sometimes she was exhibited to the guests of the Café de Chartres and was expected to sing for them while they poked her and marvelled at her bottom.

The exact date of her death is not known and various dates have been posited by numerous sources. Cuvier, who dissected Saartjie’s body, places her death on 29 December 1815; The French *Annales, Politiques, Morales et Littéraires* mentioned that she died on 30 December 1815; and the *Journal Général de France* placed Saartjie’s death on 31 December 1815 (Spies, 2014). Saartjie Baartman’s skeletal remains and the plaster cast prepared by Cuvier (Kirby, 1949:60; Kirby, 1954a:319) were on display in a glass case in the *Musèe de l’Homme* to the public until 1974 (see Plate 3).⁵²

Saartjie’s official burial in South Africa took place nearly two centuries after her death – this process was

⁴⁷ Rèaux’s first name is not known.

⁴⁸ “Au printemps de 1815, ayant été conduite au Jardin du Roi, elle eut la complaisance se dépouiller et de se laisser peindre d’après le nu.”

⁴⁹ *Histoire naturelle des mammifères: avec des figures originales, coloriées, dessinées d’après des animaux vivans.* Vol 1. Published 1824.

⁵⁰ All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

⁵¹ “J’ai l’honneur de présenter à l’Académie les organes génitaux de cette femme préparés, de manière à ne laisser aucun doute sur la nature de son tablier.”

⁵² The photograph in Plate 3 was kindly supplied by Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, Paris (Largue, 2016).

initiated by President Nelson Mandela and, between 1996 and 1998, discussions were held between the South African and French governments regarding the repatriation of Saartjie Baartman's remains to South Africa. French Senator Nicolas About stated that it was in France's interest and honour to return Saartjie's remains. In turn South Africa assured "the international community that the case of Sara Baartman was *sui generis* [unique] and not part of a wider effort to repatriate the remains of people whose remains lay in so many public and private collections around the world" (Crais & Scully, 2009:154). In 2002, France passed an edict which requested Saartjie's remains to be returned to South Africa within two months.

Former President Thabo Mbeki led the ceremony on National Women's Day, 2002, in which Saartjie's skeletal remains were buried on a cliff overlooking the Gamtoos Valley, in the small town of Hankey, in the Eastern Cape. Although Saartjie's remains were placed in a coffin and interred, according to Christian custom, there were also Khoisan customs present; before the interment took place, a Khoisan chief broke a bow and arrow and scattered the pieces into the grave and burned fragrant buchu leaves to cleanse Saartjie's spirit (BBC, 2002).

In 2010, Abdellatif Kechiche (2010) produced a biographic film, entitled *Vénus Noire*, about Saartjie Baartman's life abroad. This particular film, based on historical documents and archival sources, provides a glimpse into the trials and tribulations Saartjie endured and the treatment she was subjected to during her time abroad. With this brief biography in mind, I briefly discuss the *syuzhet* and *fabula* before commencing with the close reading of the text.

4.4 Saartjie: description of the *syuzhet* and *fabula*

From the brief biography provided in 4.3, we can now consider how the elements of the *syuzhet* and *fabula* (see 3.3.1) occur throughout the close reading of the text. *Saartjie's syuzhet* is comprised of various anachronies, among other devices. Although *Saartjie* only spans twenty minutes on the stage, the anachronies presented in the opera represents references to Saartjie's whole life – from childhood to adulthood, and her final demise in Paris in 1815. Hofmeyr and Zerbst, who co-wrote the libretto with Hofmeyr, had to employ devices, such as analepsis and anamnesis, to not only fit into the prescribed time limit of 20 minutes but also to endow the addressee with enough information about Saartjie, without communicating these ideas overtly. Hofmeyr (2014) affirmed:

the idea was to try and fit into those twenty minutes as much of what makes the protagonist what she is, in my mind, without kind of over-crowding the details. She refers to a number of things without being too explicit about them and perhaps a certain amount of pre-knowledge of her story is necessary to appreciate what is going on.

To highlight an example: the chronological flow of time is interrupted in *Saartjie*, when she reminisces about her life in South Africa, thus adding complexity to the story on stage. The anachronic plot is further strengthened by means of the music and the quotation of three traditional South African songs. Furthermore, these interruptions *flesh* Saartjie out, as a multi-cultural character (Hofmeyr, 2014). From this example

taken from *Saartjie*, we can see that the temporal events in a story may be manipulated and treated to create the *syuzhet*.

When one considers *Saartjie's fabula*, the materials are drawn from two centuries' worth of chronological events (see 4.3) – from her life in South Africa, prior to going abroad, to London and Paris. In Paris, she was presumably sold or handed over to Rëaux and, after her death, Saartjie was displayed as a museum object until 1974. Her remains were only repatriated to South Africa in 2002. In effect, *Saartjie's* libretto (and *syuzhet*) also spans a period of over two hundred years. With all of these preliminary remarks in mind, which served as an introduction to the close reading, we can now turn our attention to the close reading of the text.

4.5 Close reading of the text

In this section, the close reading of the text is conducted. Firstly, the application of Peirce's theory of semiotics is revised to orientate us as to how the signs in the text can be interpreted. Further to this, the leitmotifs (4.5.2), which are found throughout the text, are presented and discussed as these aid in constituting the context.

4.5.1 Applying Peirce's semiotic theory to music

Peirce's theory of semiotics has been discussed in Chapter 3. In Example 1, the object here is an event and relates to real life (as portrayed in the opera) – Saartjie has finished a day's work and is making her way up to her upstairs apartment in Paris. She is most probably exhausted after a hard day's work and suffering from a respiratory ailment, Barss (2010:24) postulated that Saartjie may have died due to pneumonia, hence she would be panting upon arriving at her apartment (see 4.5.4). The representamen is Hofmeyr's musical score (whether written or sounded) and the interpretant could be seen as the monodrama.

Example 1⁵³: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section I, bars 69–72. Saartjie arrives at her room having difficulty to breathe (flute and vocal extract)^{54, 55}

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is for Flute (Fl.) and the bottom staff is for the vocal part (Saar.). Both staves are in the key of D major (one sharp) and common time (C). The flute part starts at bar 69 with a 'Solo' marking and a dynamic of 'mp sfocato, quasi ansimante (breathy, as if panting)'. It features a series of triplet eighth notes. The vocal part starts at bar 70 with a dynamic of 'mp' and the lyrics 'I can-not breathe!'.

⁵³ This is the breathing leitmotif, which will be discussed further in 4.5.2.2 – see Example 3.

⁵⁴ All musical examples and extracts from the score and libretto are drawn from Hofmeyr's (2009) opera, with permission from the composer, see Appendix F.

⁵⁵ For the sake of brevity, all musical examples have been reset and are presented in an extracted format, showing only the most important features and instruments, unless otherwise stated.

Saartjie's heavy breathing is resembled and represented by the flute, instead of by herself. This is an icon – the addressee's attention is first drawn to the flute solo (Example 1, bars 69²–72¹) and then Saartjie's words *I cannot breathe!* (Example 1, bars 70²–71). Furthermore, the musical gesture embodies an indexical quality – the addressee's attention is drawn to Saartjie standing at the corner of her room, experiencing difficulty to breathe. This specific leitmotif is considered to be a symbol by Tarasti's (2002) definition, as “one does need to learn the language of tonal music in order to understand the sign. Otherwise it would be nothing more than acoustic arousal” (Tarasti, 2002:11).

Applying Peirce's theory to Example 1, the flute leitmotif, along with Saartjie's lyrics, form a *rhetic iconic qualisign* – the first class of sign, as seen in Figure 5 in Chapter 3. Breaking this down into the individual parts we get: (a) the *rheme*, which refers to the feeling of Saartjie's heavy breathing, (b) the *icon*, which refers to the likeness it shares with a person panting heavily, and (c) the *qualisign* is embodied with the quality of having difficulty breathing.

Behind all of this, looms the *dynamic object*, which is an aspect of the physical realm – in the case of music, it may be the composer, or in opera – the composer and librettist, singers/characters, the addresser who has encoded and infused the text with signs.

4.5.2 Leitmotifs in the text

The leitmotif is described by Millington (2006:153) as follows: the German word *leitmotiv*, meaning *leading motif*, is a term adopted by early Wagner scholars to describe what they believed to be the “most important feature contributing to comprehensibility and expressive intensity” in Wagner's music dramas. A leitmotif is, thus, a musical theme or coherent musical idea, which is clearly defined by the composer to retain its identity to be recognisable upon returning later in the music. The purpose of the leitmotif is to “represent a person, object, place, idea, state of mind, supernatural force, or any other ingredient in a dramatic work” (Millington, 2006:153). Additionally, the leitmotif can become an anthropomorphic actant – it embodies a certain quality that allows it to *act* in the text through representation. A leitmotif may return in the work unaltered or altered with respect to rhythm, interval structure, harmony, different instrumentation in the orchestration, or even be combined with other leitmotifs to usher in a new affected condition. Wagner employed the leitmotif in his operas and Liszt in his symphonic poems to “establish a higher unity across the whole by means of consistent leitmotifs (*durchgehende Leitmotive*)” (Millington, 2006:153).⁵⁶

Hofmeyr (2014) expressed that he was “quite a firm adherent of the Wagnerian idea of leitmotif and development of leitmotif and action of leitmotifs to convey symbolic and emotional meaning”. I deem it necessary to introduce the reader to the leitmotifs, which I have identified, before the close reading

⁵⁶ The earliest known use of the term *leitmotiv* stems from the work of A. W. Ambros, who is credited with coining the term in or before 1865 (Millington, 2006:153).

commences. For the sake of identifying the particular leitmotifs, I have named each of the leitmotifs myself. Moreover, I have to point out that Hofmeyr did not suggest names for any of the leitmotifs, which I will discuss in the following sub-sections. These leitmotifs are Saartjie's emotional leitmotif,⁵⁷ the breathing, entrapment, death, and star leitmotifs.

4.5.2.1 Saartjie's emotional leitmotif

Saartjie's emotional leitmotif (Example 2) is the most salient leitmotif, as it is the one leitmotif, which is employed not only in the orchestra but also by Saartjie herself. This leitmotif is closely associated with Saartjie throughout the opera and how *she* feels and reacts to certain events and the like. Through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*, Saartjie's emotional leitmotif is also an actant, through anthropomorphism, by bestowing Saartjie's emotional state upon this particular leitmotif, as pointed out above. This leitmotif is not static, in the sense that it only occurs when Saartjie is agitated or feeling endangered. The leitmotif occurs in Saartjie's vocals as well, and is transformed in numerous ways, such as an intervallic change, tempo, dynamics, and the like, to fit the emotion Saartjie is experiencing at a given moment.⁵⁸

In its purely instrumental form in the orchestra, this leitmotif is an actant that is anthropomorphised to portray a vast array of emotions. In the *Introduction*, this leitmotif transposes a tone up every time it occurs. The sequential and ascending treatment of this leitmotif adds to the agitation it invokes in the listener. This leitmotif may seem very complex for a simple woman from the Cape but Hofmeyr (2014) saw Saartjie Baartman as a complex person and thus the leitmotif associated with her emotional state is quite apt and fitting. Hofmeyr (2014) expressed that

... the upward surge that one hears at the beginning of the opera was for me more closely associated with the idea of agitation, anger, frustration, and such things. And I suppose one could also associate that with yearning and ascending and striving and that same leitmotif right at the end of the opera is then transformed into something I suppose in like an achievement or redemption or a triumph or whatever you would like to call it when she finally manages to leave this world behind and return to the world she longs to be [in].

I differ from Spies' view (2014:22) that "three-note Saartjie motive" (see Example 2, bars 5–6^{1a}) can be considered as the sole emotional leitmotif. I am, rather, of the opinion that the entire leitmotif from bars 5–8¹ is to be associated with Saartjie and her emotional state.

This particular leitmotif can be classified as a *rhetic indexical legisign*; it not only draws the listener's attention to but also provides a representation of Saartjie's agitation and anger, as well as her yearning

⁵⁷ Hofmeyr (2014) referred to this particular leitmotif as a "motif of irritation and [it] eventually achieves some kind of fulfilment at the end of the opera".

⁵⁸ In his article, Spies (2014) focused especially on the vocal elements of the emotional leitmotif. However, in this dissertation, the focus is not on the very specific vocal employment of this leitmotif, as in Spies' article, but rather on how this leitmotif aids in the construction of context and how it functions as both a sign and an actant at times.

(Hofmeyr, 2014) to change her situation as a Parisian showgirl. Furthermore, this particular leitmotif is a *representation* of Saartjie’s emotions. This leitmotif and its association with Saartjie’s negative emotions – frustration, agitation, anger, disgust, yearning, to name a few – is finally resolved in the final section of the opera when, she dies.

Example 2: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Introduction, bars 5–8. Saartjie’s emotional leitmotif (violin part extract)

4.5.2.2 Breathing leitmotif

The second leitmotif found in the text is the breathing leitmotif (Example 3) and is associated with Saartjie’s laboured breathing on the stage. It is portrayed by means of the flute (and other woodwind and brass instruments which will be pointed out where necessary) rather than Saartjie herself, as seen in the example below. It is personified by the stage direction *sfocato, quasi ansimante (breathy, as if panting)* thus bestowing upon it the ability to become an actant through the orchestra’s *Sprachvermögen*. In addition to this, as pointed out in 4.5.1, this particular leitmotif is also a *rhetic indexical insign* and is closely associated with Saartjie – this particular leitmotif points to Saartjie’s declining health towards the end of her life. This leitmotif, and its subsequent alterations, occur throughout the text and are studied later on.

Example 3: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section I, bars 69–72. Breathing leitmotif

4.5.2.3 Entrapment leitmotif

Saartjie’s feelings of being captured in her situation, as well as the physical confinements of her small room, are portrayed in the music by means of static and long-held chords, which are engaged throughout the opera. Entrapment (Example 4) is not only physical in the text but also emotional, as Saartjie feels captured in her thoughts and feelings at times when she reminisces about the past during an anamnesis (see 4.5.5 and 4.5.7 respectively). The entrapment leitmotif is an *abstract* actant because entrapment, as *portrayed in the music*, is not physical but is *implied* through the orchestra’s *Sprachvermögen*. This particular leitmotif is reminiscent of Rilke’s poem *The Panther*: “He feels as though there are a thousand

bars, / and beyond a thousand bars, no world”⁵⁹ (Rilke, 1982:575). The bars in Saartjie’s real life and in the opera are metaphorical though (see 4.5.3). In her article, *Five new South African short operas: a report*, Spies (2010:83) pointed out that, even in death, Saartjie has not escaped entrapment: her grave is situated on a lonely hill near Hankey, in the Eastern Cape, surrounded by a high fence. The entrapment leitmotif is a *rhetic iconic qualisign* – the static chord creates a metaphorical feeling of entrapment, and desolation, and, in turn, evokes this particular feeling in the listener.

Example 4: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section I, bars 69–72. Entrapment leitmotif

4.5.2.4 Death leitmotif

The leitmotif that represents death is a small, cell-like leitmotif that Hofmeyr employs throughout the opera (Example 5) and is associated with Saartjie’s demise in the final section of the opera. The death leitmotif is an *argument symbolic legisign*, as it was defined by *a priori* convention by Hofmeyr (2014): “The ... repeated note leitmotifs that evokes ... almost a funeral march when she speaks of death and [it is employed] again when there is a reference to death or when her own approaches [in the final section]”. This leitmotif likewise also symbolically points to the relentlessness of time, moving along and not standing still. This leitmotif is also an *abstract* actant because death is not tangible although the effect can be seen when a person is on their deathbed or has died.

The death leitmotif is also symbolic of *how* Saartjie died, as a human, due to the gazing and prodding she had to endure in London, and especially Paris. Saartjie’s humanity also *dies* as she is reduced to a freak and a scientific racial experiment in the eyes of Europe. Saartjie’s life was quite tumultuous, as seen in 4.3. It can be asserted that Rëaux also forced Saartjie to work herself to death: the long work hours, in combination with her ever-increasing dependence on alcohol and possibly recurring bouts of a respiratory infection, eventually led to her demise.

⁵⁹ “Ihm ist, als ob es tausend Stäbe gäbe / und hinter tausend Stäben keine Welt.” (in the original German)

Example 5: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Introduction, bars 1–3. Death leitmotif

4.5.2.5 Star leitmotif

The last of the five grand leitmotifs in *Saartjie* is the star motif (Example 6). I interpret this particular leitmotif as a *rhetic iconic legisign* and it becomes an actant through personification, as is exemplified by two instances: firstly, from a young age, Khoisan mothers would show their young children “those *friendly stars*” and teach them to reach towards the stars (Hahn, 1881:43, my italics). Secondly, the stars are seen as the eyes of the deceased ancestors, looking down on earth and the Khoisan interpret a falling star as a death within the human community (Afolayan, 2004:58). This further strengthens, firstly, the belief of the Khoisan in an afterlife (Hahn, 1881:85) and, secondly, the importance of this particular leitmotif as an actant.⁶⁰ Hofmeyr (2014) affirmed that a “glittering type of sonority and again scales and instrumental colours that are for me [as the composer] associated with the idea of sparkling and glittering and star-like” is employed. References to the stars occur at various instances in both the libretto and the music throughout the opera. This particular leitmotif is mostly portrayed by means of the music, in support of the ideas and elements in the libretto associated with the stars. I consider the star leitmotif as a *mixed analepsis* because it refers simultaneously to Saartjie’s past life in South Africa (both childhood and adulthood) and her future when she dies (see 4.5.9).

⁶⁰ Saartjie was a descendent of the Gonaqua Khoekhoe and, to her people, the stars were an object of observation and contemplation – evidence is found in the multitude of names bestowed upon them by the Khoisan people (Hahn, 1881:23).

Example 6: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Introduction, bars 38–39. Star leitmotif with nostalgia actant⁶¹

Throughout this chapter, the various leitmotifs and their uses are examined. Although some leitmotifs occur in combination with others, they are discussed on separate occasions and the combinations are cross-referenced.

Apart from the five grand leitmotifs discussed above, Hofmeyr also introduces a counter-melody (Example 6, bars 39²–40⁴), which only features later in the opera but on numerous occasions. From the melody of *Al lê die berge nog so blou*, the nostalgia actant is derived by the composer (see Example 7) and used in various guises and instances, which are examined during the course of this chapter. Hofmeyr (2014) pointed out that the counter-melody is “associated with her [Saartjie’s] nostalgia,⁶² which is the melody which comes as counter-motif to *Al lê die blou* and which in the opera is heard first in the Introduction when *Al lê die berge nog so blou* is not heard yet”.

The nostalgia actants are marked A, B, and C, respectively, on the score in the original melody of *Al lê die berge nog so blou*, which follows *after* the clarinet’s introduction of this folksong (Example 6). In the clarinet, the altered and embellished nostalgia actants are labelled *A1*, *B1*, and *C1*, to designate their relation to the original material which they are derived from. I have indicated the derivations below the song. The addressee first hears an altered version of this actant, which will be labelled *nostalgia actant* throughout this dissertation, during the *Introduction*, as seen in Example 6.

⁶¹ In the original score, in bars 38–39, the cello and contrabass play the same notes on the same staff, however in resetting the example, it is shown on two separate lines to accommodate the change in pitch in bar 40.

⁶² Throughout this dissertation, I make a clear distinction between *nostalgia* and *yearning*. *Nostalgia* is used to express when Saartjie thinks back with fond memories to her life in South Africa before going abroad. *Yearning* shows Saartjie’s strong desire to return home and change her situation as a Parisian showgirl.

Example 7: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Introduction, bars 296–311. Nostalgia actant in the clarinet (A1, B1, and C1) derived from the melody of *Al lê die berge nog so blou*

Musical score for Example 7, showing the Clarinet (Cl.) and Saarländische Volkslieder (Saar.) parts. The score is in 2/4 time, marked 'Sognante' with a tempo of '♩ = c. 52-56'. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

The Clarinet part (Cl.) is marked 'Solo Clarinetto in la' and 'mp espressivo'. It features three distinct melodic segments labeled A1, C1, and B1, which are derived from the melody of the Volkslieder. Segment A1 spans bars 296-300, C1 spans bars 301-303, and B1 spans bars 304-304. The Saarländische Volkslieder part (Saar.) is marked 'Sognante' and 'mp'. It features three distinct melodic segments labeled A, B, and C, which are derived from the melody of the Volkslieder. Segment A spans bars 305-307, B spans bars 308-310, and C spans bars 311-312. The lyrics are: 'lê die ber-ge nog so blou, al lê die ber-ge nog so blou, al lê die ber-ge nog so blou, jou woor-de sal ek steeds ont - hou.'

Example 8: Comparison of the derived nostalgia actant from *Al lê die berge nog so blou*

Musical score for Example 8, showing the Clarinet (Cl.) and Saarländische Volkslieder (Saar.) parts. The score is in 2/4 time, marked 'Solo Clarinetto in la' and 'mp espressivo'. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

The Clarinet part (Cl.) is marked 'Solo Clarinetto in la' and 'mp espressivo'. It features three distinct melodic segments labeled A1, B1, and C1, which are derived from the melody of the Volkslieder. Segment A1 spans bars 297-300, B1 spans bars 303-304, and C1 spans bars 312-312. The Saarländische Volkslieder part (Saar.) is marked 'mp'. It features three distinct melodic segments labeled A, B, and C, which are derived from the melody of the Volkslieder. Segment A spans bars 304-306, B spans bars 308-310, and C spans bars 310-312. The lyrics are: 'A Al lê die ber-ge nog so blou, al lê die ber-ge nog so blou, B al lê die ber-ge nog so blou, C jou woor-de sal ek steeds ont - hou.'

With the five grand leitmotifs, and a counter-melody associated with longing and nostalgia, it is clear that attentive listening is required throughout this opera to be able to identify these elements, as well as the actants, which are present through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*, and to associate them with the relevant occurrences throughout the duration of the opera. I will now turn the attention to the close reading of the text.

4.5.3 Introduction (bars 1–65¹)⁶³

The introduction to *Saartjie* functions as a preamble to the opera and introduces some of the actants and the leitmotifs the audience (addressee) will encounter throughout the opera. The actants, and especially the leitmotifs, depending on their use, signify various singularities depending on the context in which it is used at a particular point in the monodrama.

The *Introduction* opens with a snap pizzicato, in bar one (Example 9), which serves as a subtle musical introduction to the actant Rèaux, and his name is mentioned only once in the libretto as well. Furthermore, follows the *Inau* actant is introduced briefly in bar 1^{2b} as well and is discussed in further detail in Section VI (see 4.5.9). Saartjie's empty cage is lit from above and the lighting fades again (0:50)⁶⁴ only to shine on Saartjie, who stands alone and expressionless outside the cage (00:58–01:25) in the far left corner of the stage standing next to children's toys, including a rocking horse, a Ferris wheel, and a miniature carousel.

The children's toys, although Western, refers to Saartjie's longing to have a child and to play with these toys. The desolate melody heard in the oboe solo, together with the nail pizzicati⁶⁵ in the string section (00:58–01:25, Example 9), refers respectively to Saartjie and Rèaux and functions as an *iconic qualisign*, which resembles Rèaux. The oboe's⁶⁶ desolate melody, together with Saartjie being illuminated from above, embodies a metaphorical feeling of sorrow and desolation associated with Saartjie, as she stands alone next to the toys. I interpret this particular actant as a pure index: the sorrowful melody that is played by the oboe focuses the addressee's attention on Saartjie's loneliness. The nail pizzicati in the string section are associated with the anthropomorphised actant Rèaux as seen initially in bar 1¹ (see Example 9).⁶⁷

⁶³ For the sake of conducting the close reading, I have divided the text into an *Introduction* and six succeeding *Sections*. From the interview with Hofmeyr (2014), he only refers to an *Introduction*.

⁶⁴ Time references are provided as a guide to actual happenings, as seen in the accompanying DVD.

⁶⁵ By rather using the fingernail than the rounded flesh of the finger, the nail pizzicato produces a different timbre – an effect that is more sharp and piercing than a normal pizzicato. Bartók first used this technique in his 1936 composition *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* (Strange & Strange, 2001:63).

⁶⁶ Berlioz (1882:81) referred to the oboe being capable of expressing “the grief of a fragile being”.

⁶⁷ Dashed bar lines at the end of music examples indicates that it is an incomplete bar.

discussion of this point, see 4.5.9). During this interruption, Saartjie clutches her chest and bends forward. From bars 51 to 55¹, the emotional leitmotif is employed in an upward fashion and, according to Hofmeyr (2014), this is done to place Saartjie in “a specific kind of attic environment”. Symbolically, the emotional leitmotif points to Saartjie’s mounting frustration with her situation as a Parisian showgirl, being physically ill, and the treatment she is subjected to by Rèaux – as will become clear throughout the ensuing subsections of this chapter.

Example 11: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Introduction, bars 48–55. Interruption of the star leitmotif by the death leitmotif, leading into Saartjie’s emotional leitmotif (extract)

4.5.4 Section I (bars 65²–175²)⁶⁸

The section opens with Saartjie entering her sparsely furnished room on the stage. Apart from the name of the opera, a person who may be unfamiliar with Saartjie Baartman’s history may be wondering who the character is. Hofmeyr is quite liberal with furnishing the audience with clues as to who this particular person may be. Someone who is perhaps familiar with F. C. Lewis’ 1810 aquatint, *Saartjee, the Hottentot Venus* (see Plate 1 and Plate 2 respectively), may be able to immediately identify the character as Saartjie Baartman. In this section, Saartjie does, however, introduce herself later as *the famous Saartjie Baartman, known as the Venus Hottentot* (see Example 17, bars 151³–157). Saartjie is contemplating how tired she is. Saartjie comments on the evening’s show with a contemptuous waltz (Example 14). Quickly, her mood shifts to a more serious one as she vows that she will no longer take part in Rèaux’s shows and proceeds to comment on her dehumanising experience with artists drawing her almost completely nude and scientists

⁶⁸ Each section will be introduced with a brief synopsis to provide an overview of the particular section.

observing and measuring her body. Saartjie becomes increasingly more inebriated throughout this section and, by means of another contemptuous waltz (Example 17), she soothes her mood by consuming some more brandy.

SAARTJIE [Clutching her upper chest]:
Ah, these stairs will be the death of me!
I cannot breathe!

Saartjie is exhausted and exclaims, “*Ah, these stairs will be the death of me*” (see Example 12, bars 66³–68). About the use of up- and downward motions, such as stairs and the symbolism behind this, Zerbst (2016) states:

Saartjie’s fate was a tragic one and any short-lived triumphs she may have experienced were always tempered with setbacks and painful disillusionment. The emotions she experienced were best portrayed in this way – misused, attempting to recover some of her agency, etc. and going through these ‘ups and downs’ many times ... This adds an extra dimension to the drama and gives a sense of Saartjie’s being pushed and pulled, back and forth, through time and history.

Saartjie’s vocal line resembles that of somebody who is panting for breath. Of particular interest here is how her laboured breathing is rather represented by the flute (02:43–02:53, Example 12, bars 69²–72¹). The breath-leitmotif is further strengthened by the entrapment leitmotif in the strings (68²–69¹). At this particular moment in the opera, Saartjie is feeling trapped in her own tired and sick body. In addition to this, this specific sign, furthermore, strengthens the visual representation of the physical space in which the action takes place, namely Saartjie’s room and other imagery of entrapment. Saartjie’s room on stage consists of an outlined silver cube – which resembles a glass case, and it is lit around the bottom as well – in which she is placed, much like a scientific exhibition (see Still 1 and Still 2 respectively).

The stage direction in Hofmeyr’s (2009) libretto⁶⁹ (see Appendix A) reads as follow with regards to Saartjie’s outfit:

Saartjie enters, wearing pointed green slippers with black silk bows, and a long cloak which covers her down to her ankles. Under it she has on a flesh-coloured body stocking lined with cotton, and decorated with ivory-coloured, ostrich-eggshell beads looped around her neck and waist, an elaborate apron and various pendants, as in the 1811 aquatint by FC Lewis. Her face is made up with greasepaint and soot. She carries a *ramkie* [...], which she throws on the bed.

It is, thus, clear from Hofmeyr’s description of Saartjie’s costume that it is a visual intertextual reference to F. C. Lewis’ acquaints, as seen in Plate 1 and Plate 2 respectively (see 4.3.2). Of particular interest are Saartjie’s shoes: these are clearly not of the traditional type worn by the Gonaqua people of South Africa and were unquestionably purchased in England (Scully & Crais, 2008:317). It is clear that Saartjie’s outfit

⁶⁹ *Libretto* will exclusively refer to the written text without the musical setting while *score* refers to the full score of the opera, which comprises of the libretto and the music as sheet music.

distinguishes her from the Parisians who are dressed in French period costume, further emphasising Saartjie’s otherness when compared to the Parisians.

Example 12: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section I, bars 66–72. Saartjie enters her room – death, breathing, and entrapment leitmotifs

65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72

Fl. *ff* *mp* *sforcato, quasi ansimante (breathy, as if panting)*
Breathing leitmotif

Ob. *ff*

Cl. *ff* *pp*

Fg. *ff* *pp*

Cr. in fa [Div. a 2] *mf* *pp*

Tr. *mf* *pp*

Trbne. *mf* *pp*

Timp. *mf* *pp* I: F I: A

Saartjie enters, wearing pointed green slippers with black silk bows and a long cloak which covers her down to her ankles. Her gace is made up with greasepaint and soot. She carries a rankie, which she throws on the bed. SAARTJIE [clutching her chest]

Ah, these stairs will be the death of me!

mp
I can-not breathe!
Death leitmotif (altered)

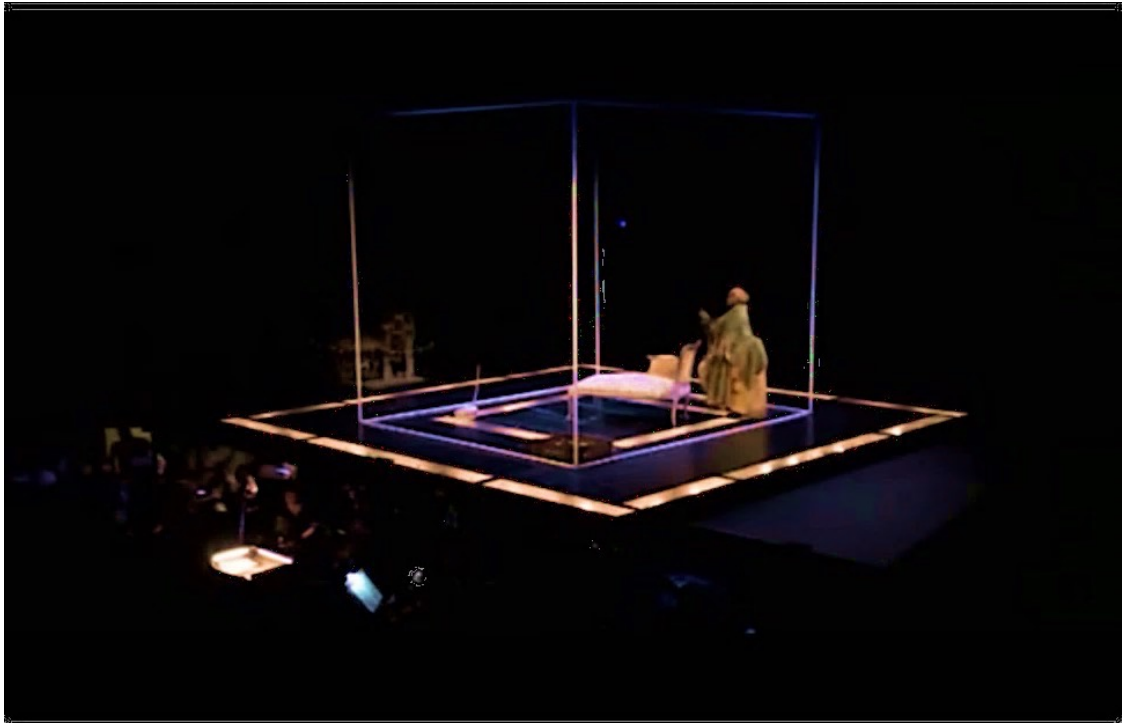
Vn. I *ff* *div. a 3*

Vn. II *ff* *div. a 3*

Vi. *ff* *div.*

Vc. *ff* *non div.*

Cb. *ff* *div.*
Entrapment leitmotif



Still 1: *Saartjie* by Hendrik Hofmeyr. Detail of Saartjie's outfit and cage on the stage. Costumes and set designed by Michael Mitchell. Production recorded at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, 21 November 2010. Screen grab taken from DVD produced by Tony Mittelmeyer.



Still 2: *Saartjie* by Hendrik Hofmeyr. Detail of Parisians and their French period costume. Costumes and set designed by Michael Mitchell. Production recorded at the Baxter Theatre, Cape Town, 21 November 2010. Screen grab taken from DVD produced by Tony Mittelmeyer.

Midwinter – and I feel like I'm on fire!
[She throws open the window, then drops onto
the bed, reaches for the bottle of brandy and
takes a long draught.]

Saartjie's exclamation *Midwinter and I feel like I'm on fire!* (03:01–03:11) in bars 74³–78 (Example 13) is brought to an anxious climax, by means of the harmonics present in the static chords in the strings (bars 74–76^{1a}). The simile found in *I feel like I'm on fire* is, firstly, strengthened by the *sul ponticello*-playing in combination with the tremolo in bars 77–78^{4a} and 79–81^{1a}, respectively, and gives the word *fire* a stronger effect. Secondly, it is related to Saartjie's feverish condition; I interpret this combination as a rhematic iconic qualisign. Saartjie's distress – whether over her health or current situation – is strengthened by the emotional leitmotif that appears in canonical writing played by the trumpet and trombone in bars 77–80¹. This coincides with the abovementioned techniques found in the strings. Saartjie scurries around the room while the emotional leitmotif is present in the trumpet and trombone (03:08–03:11, Example 13, bars 77–81¹), in search of her bottle of brandy (03:12–03:20).

Example 13: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section I, bars 74–81¹. Combination of the emotional and entrapment leitmotifs

She consumes quite a large amount of brandy, which is accompanied by the downward motion found in the strings (03:21–03:33, Example 14, bars 82–88). The change in Saartjie’s emotional state occurs in bar 88 after she sits down and takes another swig of brandy from the bottle. The key signature changes from B minor to A major over the course of bars 81³–87. The time signature also changes from quadruple meter to triple metre in bar 89, which creates the setting for the contemptuous waltz as seen in Example 14.

Hofmeyr (2014) had the following to say about the contemptuous waltz:

the fairground music is always slightly tweaked harmonically to make it a little bit more spikey – almost in a way that a composer like Prokofiev might have done. Whereas I am not quoting fairground music and wanting to create a fairground moment. I’m looking at the fairground perspective of Saartjie through Saartjie’s eyes [...] It becomes three times removed. I’m looking at Saartjie, looking at the fairground [and the fairground in turn is] looking at Saartjie. So a fairly complex ironic perspective which is what I try to convey in the music and the music doesn’t try to be as readily accessible and attractive as normal fairground music which would be it paints that attractiveness

with spikey elements with things which show that the person singing at that moment regards the whole issue with a certain measure of distaste if you like.

Ah, that's better!
Another dreary evening
of being prodded, gawked at, pawed,
of prancing like a monkey
for the jades of gay Preee

Saartjie's exclamation *ah, that's better*, introduces the first contemptuous waltz. (03:34–03:39, Example 14, bars 88–89). This is the first of three contemptuous waltzes, which is employed by the composer (03:43–04:02, Example 14). During the delivery of the waltz, Saartjie is seated on the chaise longue facing the audience, as if relating her story to them. Saartjie holds the bottle in her hand – while waltzing with childlike innocence, swinging her upper body to the beat of the music. She extends her foot and gestures toward it, which coincides with *pawed* (03:51). Saartjie toasts to the imaginary Parisians and *the jades of gay Preee* (03:57–04:00). Hofmeyr (2014) explained that Saartjie's gestures relate to how she views her life at that particular moment as a Parisian showgirl and “at that moment [she] regards the whole issue with a certain measure of distaste” (Hofmeyr, 2014).

Example 14: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section I, bars 81³–107. Downward motion in the string section leading to the first contemptuous waltz

The musical score for Example 14 consists of several staves. At the top, the vocal line for Saartjie is shown with lyrics: "Ah, that's bet-ter" and "A no-ther dreary". Above the vocal line, the tempo is marked "Tempo di valzer J = c. 144-152". Below the vocal line, the instrumental parts for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass are shown. The string section starts with a downward motion, leading to the first contemptuous waltz. The score includes various dynamics such as *ff*, *dim.*, *mf*, *p*, and *pp*. There are also performance instructions like *La solent*, *rit.*, *Tutti unid pizz.*, *unid pizz.*, *sempre sim.*, and *pizz. gliss.*. The score is numbered from 81 to 94.

(Example continues on page 60)

(Example continued from page 59)

Prancing like a monkey is more than a mere statement; it invokes Europe’s view that the indigenous people from South Africa were, as a matter of fact, a completely different race from that of Europe (Crais & Scully, 2009:140) and thus were to be treated differently. “The handsomest ape is ugly compared with humankind; the wisest man appears as an ape when compared with a god” (Plato, s.a.:289a). Saint-Hilaire (cited by Le Garrec, 1990:7), compares Saartjie’s head with those of apes, such as an orangutan, and her prodigious buttocks with the female mandrill monkeys during menstruation.⁷⁰ Moreover, with this reference to “prancing like a monkey”, we have Saartjie who stands in stark contrast to the Parisians – not only in clothing (Saartjie appearing with an exposed midriff later in the opera and the Parisians in evening wear) but also in race (Saartjie was of non-European origin as opposed to the Parisians who are of European descent). Saartjie was, thus, stripped of all humanity.

As specified by Ferber (2007:12), a distinction is made in English between apes and monkeys and the latter is seen as licentious. Cuvier (1817:263) likened Saartjie to a monkey: “Her movements had something abrupt and capricious about them, which reminds one of a monkey. She had a way of making her lips protrude entirely in a similar way to what we have observed in the orangutan”.⁷¹ Ashcroft *et al.* (2007:37) stated that the imperial and colonial powers saw it as their duty to reproduce their culture and norms in the colonised societies, due to these societies’ perceived inferiority, unsophisticated behaviour and manners, and their depravity. Furthermore, the aim of the colonisers was to bring advancement to the colonised colony. This was certainly the case in the colonised ‘English’ Cape, where Saartjie hailed from, however, in Paris, she was rather exploited and viewed as an animal by scientists and the public alike.

It must be the last time!
 [she takes another draught.]
Rèaux cannot force me to continue

⁷⁰ “La prodigieuse taille de ses fesses” lui inspire une comparaison avec les femelles des singes maimon et mandrill à l’occasion de leur menstruation (Saint-Hilaire cited by Le Garrec, 1990:7).

⁷¹ “Ses mouvemens avoient quelque chose de brusque et de capricieux qui rappeloit ceux du singe. Elle avoit sur tout une manière de faire saillir ses lèvres tout-à-fait pareille à ce que nous avons observé dans l’orangoutang.”

Saartjie stands up from the chaise longue as the waltz ends and exclaims *it must be the last time!* (04:02–04:09). While moving towards the corner of the room, the *pizzicato* (04:12, Example 15, bar 119¹) is strengthened by Saartjie’s gesture of holding the bottle and ‘stamping’ it next to her body. Saartjie moves to the front right-hand corner of her room and holds on to the corner, while bending forward to strengthen the words *I am ready to collapse* (04:16–04:19).

Saartjie was too ill to perform on New Year’s Eve in 1815; Rèaux “became churlish about the costs of all medicines except the supply of brandy that quieted her [Saartjie’s] anxious remonstrations about the poor state of her health and how tired she was” (Holmes, 2007:129). With the aforementioned in mind, it is not difficult to picture Saartjie’s situation. The death leitmotif, present in bars 112–115, coincides with the words *it must be the last time* – a symbolic prolepsis of Saartjie’s demise in the final section of the opera. Of particular interest are the two snap pizzicati in bars 119¹ and 120¹ (Example 15), which is the actant Rèaux, wielding his whip and coercing Saartjie into performing. This particular sign can be classified as a *rhetic iconic qualisign*: the snap pizzicati bear the likeness and appearance of a whip’s snapping sound. The ascending motion in the strings in bars 120^{2b}–122¹ (Example 15) is the first alteration of Saartjie’s emotional leitmotif and is found again in bar 223 (see Example 20) when it is employed in Saartjie’s vocals. The emotional leitmotif is reduced to include only the triplet rhythms, as found originally. In addition to this, the figure is first an octave higher and then an octave lower than the original leitmotif. The significance of this reduction lies in the support it lends to Saartjie’s vocals, as she protests against continuing with Rèaux’s shows.

Example 15: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section I, bars 110–124¹. Detail of the actant Rëaux, the altered opening leitmotif, and the death leitmotif

The musical score for Example 15 shows a detailed orchestration and vocal line. The vocal part (Saartjie) is in the key of D major and 3/4 time. The lyrics are: "It must be the last time! Rëaux can-not force me to con - ti-nue, I am read-y to col-lapse." The score includes various dynamic markings and annotations for leitmotifs. The orchestral parts include woodwinds, brass, percussion, and strings. The score is divided into measures 110 through 124, with a section marked 'F' starting at measure 112.

*I am ready to collapse.
 But perhaps that's what he's after:
 Those frigid men of science
 among their skeletons and heads in jars,
 those men, who made me strip
 so they could probe me top to toe,
 those men will pay most handsomely
 for my body when I'm dead.*

In lines 13–16, a partial analepsis is found (see 3.3.2), as it does not re-join the primary narrative of the opera – it furnishes the addressee with additional information about what Saartjie was subjected to during the visit to Cuvier's laboratories. This particular analepsis is also an anamnesis – *skeletons and heads in jars* – a symbolic reference to Saartjie's situation, where she has been degraded not only to the likeness of the apes but also her entrapment of her situation, as we shall see later in the close reading.

Saartjie's reflection upon the visit to Cuvier's laboratories is filled with visual remarks, which strengthens the situation she finds herself in (see Example 16). Hofmeyr (2014) pointed out the following during the interview about his character Saartjie:

She refers to a number of things without being too explicit about them and perhaps a certain amount of pre-knowledge of her story is necessary to appreciate what is going on. But at the same time I wanted the work to be accessible to people who know nothing about Saartjie [Baartman] therefore I try to give enough information to make them understand what she is going through, why she thinks, and speaks, and feels the way she does about the issues.

She holds on to her bottle of brandy all the while, as if to comfort herself during the delivery of her reflection. Saartjie's facial expression is one of shock and horror, as she thinks back to the treatment she was subjected to in Cuvier's laboratory by *those frigid men of science / among their skeletons and heads in jars*. Saartjie raises her hand to her head (04:40–04:42, Example 16: *skeletons and heads in jars*) and clutches her cloak at the idea of *those men who made me strip* (04:44–04:49). She gestures with her hand from her head to her hip, with the fingers extending down to her feet (04:50–04:53) *so that they could probe me from top to toe*. With her free hand extended, Saartjie gestures away from her body to symbolise the scientists' handsome payment for her body (04:55–04:59). Saartjie ends with this gesture next to her head (05:00–05:04) to symbolise that the scientists would also put her head in a jar after they receive her dead body.

The contrabassoon's solo in bars 128–133 (Example 16) functions as an *indexical sign*: it draws the listener's attention to Saartjie's melancholic solo. *Frullato* playing in the clarinets and flutes (Example 16, bars 131–133 and 135–137) functions, with interpolations in the cellos (Example 16 bars 130, 133–134, and 137–138), to create the idea of a *musical conversation* among these instruments. This conversation functions as a *rhetic iconic qualisign* in this passage to resemble the exchanges between the scientists present at Saartjie's observation, while the artists draw her. Further to this, the combination of notes is reminiscent of Saartjie's emotional leitmotif and creates the idea of anxiety, as associated with this particular leitmotif. In addition to this particular sign, the three instruments resembling the scientists have become anthropomorphic actants through *Sprachvermögen*. To strengthen the feeling of entrapment Saartjie is feeling and experiencing, the entrapment leitmotif is present in the first and second violins.⁷²

⁷² It has to be pointed out that, in bars 134–138^{3a}, the second group of first violins play a combination of a perfect fifth-fourth-perfect fifth combination although diminished seventh lower than the previous figure found in bars 128–133^{3a}, whilst the second group of second violins also play a diminished seventh lower and the third group of second violins are now added to play an octave on E^b₄-E^b₅.

Example 16: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section I, bars 128–138. Saartjie’s reflection upon her observation at the *Jardin du Roi* (woodwinds, vocal, and strings extract)

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system covers bars 128 to 133, and the second system covers bars 134 to 138. The tempo is marked 'Lugubre' with a metronome marking of c. 80-88. The woodwind parts (Flute, Clarinet, and Contrabassoon) feature triplet patterns, with the Clarinet part including a 'frullato (focaltativo [optional])' instruction. The vocal part (Saartjie) has lyrics in Afrikaans and English. The string parts (Violin I, Violin II, and Cello) play a 'Entrapment leitmotif' with a 'sul pont' instruction in the Cello part. Dynamic markings include *mf* and *ppp*.

*As rare and fine a specimen, dear sirs,
as one could hope to find;
the famous Saartjie Baartman
known as la Vénus Hottentote.*

Vive *the great collection of the famed Jardin du Roi!*
[She lifts the bottle on high, as in toast, and drains it.]

In the second contemptuous waltz, Saartjie's vocal line alludes to the sorrowful melody played by the oboe during the *Introduction* (see Example 10). She walks to the chaise longue and points to it, as if the *Venus Hottenot*, Saartjie's *alter ego*, is present and laying on the chaise longue (05:09–05:27, Example 17). Saartjie walks with her bottle, as if in a sarcastic toast to *the great collection of the famed Jardin du Roi* (05:28–05:37), and proceeds to lie down on the chaise longue to which she pointed earlier (05:38–05:40).

The *frullato* playing in the flutes and clarinets (Example 17) now function to add the spikiness and harmonic tweak Hofmeyr (2014) referred to. Furthermore, the flute and clarinet hints at the psychological leitmotif once more and Saartjie's thoughts, as she addresses her 'song' to these scientists, who are merely presents as actants (Example 17, bars 144²–145¹, 146–147¹, and 148–149¹). The trombone and the contrabassoon solo functions as an actant, referring to the scientists (Example 17, bars 144–149). Saartjie compares herself to a *rare and fine a specimen*; this holds an element of truth in it – most Europeans had never travelled as far as Africa to see the Khoisan people. By means of picture books and travellers' reports from the foreign countries they have visited, Europeans were given a glimpse into the various peoples of the world from a *European* perspective. This, in turn, points out the *otherness* of these peoples. Said (1978:325) posed a number of questions with regard to 'otherness' and how other cultures are perceived:

How does one *represent* other cultures? What is *another* culture? Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved in either self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discusses the 'other')?

From the treatment Saartjie has been subjected to by the French scientists Cuvier and Saint-Hillaire, one can easily see an element of self-congratulation but also hostility in their observations about Saartjie. Cuvier's work on Black female sexuality and blackness remains shallow and he merely replicates previous works by generously sprinkling words such as *savage*, *primitive*, *monkey*, and *hideous* (Sharpley-Whiting, 2007:309) into the mix.

Example 17: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section I, bars 143³–158. Saartjie’s employment of the second contemptuous waltz

143 **H** Tempo di valzer $\text{♩} = c. 144-152$

Fl. *mp*

Cl. *mp*

Cfg. *mp*

Tr. *Solo con sord. wa-wa*
mockingly
bombastic

Saar. *mf*
"As rare and fine a spe-ci-men, dear sirs, as one could hope to find:

H Tempo di valzer $\text{♩} = c. 144-152$

Vn. I *uniti pizz.*
p

Vn. II *div. a 3*
pizz.
p

VI. *div. a 3*
pizz.
p

Vc. *uniti pizz.*
p

Cb. *pizz. gliss.*
mf
sempre sim.

151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158

Fl.

Cl.

Cfg.

Tr.

Saar. the famous Saart-jie Baart-man, known as the Ve-nus Hot-ten-tot!

Vn. I

Vn. II

VI.

Vc.

Cb.

4.5.5 Section II (bars 175³–263)

In this section, Saartjie is subjected to the Revellers' ribald song about her. She discards her cloak in frustration and 'replies' to the Revellers.

REVELLERS [far-off and indistinct, but gradually approaching]:⁷³
Africa! Avez-vous vu la Vénus Hottentote?
SAARTRJIE:
Oh, these damned Parisians!
Don't they know what time it is?
C'est vraiment une tendre gélinotte!
But of course. It's New Years Eve...
Elles est venue Africa pour faire la carrière,
But wait, what is that they are singing?
Mais ici ne fait que montrer le derrière!
REVELLERS [passing under the window]
Ah, la belle Vénus Hottentote

The ditty the male Parisians (05:48–06:30, Example 18) are singing about Saartjie is one Hofmeyr invented at the lack of finding one in the sources he consulted during his research for the libretto (Hofmeyr, 2014). The male Parisians enter (05:48), at first their words unclear, then gradually they growing louder and Saartjie suddenly sits up straight due to the raucous, ribald ditty about her. In this ditty, we have the first reference to the present time as portrayed in the opera: *but, of course, it's New Year's Eve* (06:03). This device is employed by Hofmeyr to allude to the myth that Saartjie passed away on New Year's Eve.

⁷³ This extract from the libretto has been condensed for two reasons: firstly, to resemble the musical score as the Parisians and Saartjie sings against and to one another and, secondly, for the sake of clarity. This practice will be carried throughout the remainder of the study.

Example 18: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section II, bars 175–180. Saartjie and the Parisians’ ribald ditty about her

175 Poco più mosso $\text{♩} = c. 160-168$

176

177 178 179 180

Saar. REVELLERS (far off and indistinct, but approaching gradually) Oh, these damned Pa - ri - sians!

T. *f* Af - fri - ca! up - on A - vez-vous vu la Vé - nus Hot - ten - tot - te?

Bar. *f* Af - fri - ca! up - on A - vez-vous vu la Vé - nus Hot - ten - tot - te?

B. *f* Af - fri - ca! up - on A - vez-vous vu la Vé - nus Hot - ten - tot - te?

accel.....

Poco più mosso $\text{♩} = c. 160-168$

Vn. I *pp* *gliss.* *gliss.* *cresc. poco a poco*

Vn. II *pp* *gliss.* *cresc. poco a poco*

VI. *pp* *gliss.* *gliss.* *cresc. poco a poco*

Vc. *pp* *gliss.* *cresc. poco a poco*

Cb. *pp* *div. arco* *gliss.* *cresc. poco a poco*

[Saartjie starting up] **Not another song about me?!**

Elle chante, elle danse la gavotte.

[she clamps her hands over her ears]

Enough, enough, enough,

Tous veulent l'épouser, ma a cette prière,

enough, be quiet!

La farouche ne fait que motrer le derrière!

The ditty likens Saartjie to a tender, young pullet and when she is asked for her hand in marriage, all she does is to turn tail (Example 19). The extract above is, however, not related to the event in Plate 4, where Saartjie is also shown turning tail – perhaps due to her nudity. I have included Plate 4 (*Le Jugement de Paris*’ Flanqué de ses deux inséparables, Cambacérès examine avec la gravité d’un expert la Vénus

*hottentote: à la plus belle la pomme revient de droit*⁷⁴ to show the *seemingly* innocent brutality Saartjie is subjected to, as well as the likeness it bears to the Greek myth of the judgement of Paris.

In the myth of *The Judgement of Paris*, Eris, the goddess of Discord, was angry because she was not invited to the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. Eris, in her anger, tossed a golden apple inscribed with the words ‘For the Fairest’. Three goddesses – Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite – immediately laid claim to the prized apple. Zeus, cautious of making the decision on his own, rather sent the three goddesses to Paris, a prince of Troy, who was temporarily acting as a shepherd. Each goddess had her own enticement: Hera offered him a wide empire, Athena military glory, and Aphrodite offered him the most beautiful woman in the world. Aphrodite’s offer seemed the most appealing to Paris and thus the golden apple was awarded to her (British Museum, 2013). Because Saartjie is the only living woman at this ‘judgement’ (see Plate 4), it is clear that the apple ought to be awarded to her by right – thus once more mocking Saartjie, as we saw in lines 4–17 in the libretto (compare Section I).

⁷⁴ ‘The Judgement of Paris’. Flanked by his two inseparables, Cambacérés examined the Hottenot Venus with the gravity of an expert: by right the apple belongs to the most beautiful.

Example 19: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section III, bars 195²–207¹. Saartjie’s frustration with the Revellers

195 196 197 198 199 200

Cr. Ing.

Cl.

Fg.

Mar.

Saar.

Not an - oth - er song a - bout me?! E -

T.

Hot - ten - tot - - te, El - le chan - te, el - le dan - se la ga - vot - - te.

Bar.

Hot - ten - tot - - te, El - le chan - te, el - le dan - se la ga - vot - - te.

B.

Hot - ten - tot - - te, El - le chan - te, el - le dan - se la ga - vot - - te.

Vn. I

arco sul pont. *non div.*

Vn. II

unli' arco sul pont.

Vl.

unli' arco sul pont.

Vc.

arco sul pont.

Cb.

ff

201 202 203 204 205 206 207

Cr. Ing.

dim.

Cl.

dim.

Fg.

dim.

Mar.

dim. poco a poco

Saar.

nough, e - nough e - nough, e - nough,

The revellers begin to gradually to move into the distance.

T.

Tous veu - lent l'é - pou - ser, mais à cet - te pri - èr - e La fa - rou - che ne fait

Bar.

Tous veu - lent l'é - pou - ser, mais à cet - te pri - èr - e La fa - rou - che ne fait

B.

Tous veu - lent l'é - pou - ser, mais à cet - te pri - èr - e La fa - rou - che ne fait

Vn. I

non div.

Vn. II

non div.

Vl.

non div.

Vc.

non div.

Cb.

non div.

ff



Plate 4:

Anon, s.a. *'Le Jugement de Paris' Flanqué de ses deux inséparables, Cambacérés examine avec la gravité d'un expert la Vénus hottentote : à la plus belle la pomme revient de droit.* Etching and roulette, 18.1 x 27.8 cm. De Vinck, 9314. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

*You dirty-minded dogs,
to you I am no more than this!*
[She leaps up, and staring at her image in the mirror,
tears off her cloak to reveal her costume.]

The Parisian's raucous laughter, as they leave the stage (Example 20, bars 210–211), is followed by the emotional leitmotif (06:31–06:45, Example 20, bars 212–215¹, 219–222¹, and 225^{2b}–227¹). During the downward motion, signalling the Parisians leaving the stage, Saartjie hides away behind the chaise longue (bars 209–212¹). The emotional leitmotif plays while Saartjie slowly emerges from behind the chaise longue, which finally leads to Saartjie's vocal employment of this leitmotif in a rhythmically augmented fashion (Example 20, bars 223³–227^{1a}).

Saartjie is clearly upset with the song⁷⁵ the male Revellers were singing about her and, for the first time in the opera, her voice resembles the jagged emotional leitmotif, which is associated with her emotions (*you dirty minded dogs!* see Example 20, bars 215²–219). Spies (2010:82) posited that Saartjie's vocal line now employ the emotional leitmotif however the initial leap of a sixth is reduced to a perfect-fifth. In bar 223, the three notes – E, F, and C – are set against *I am no*. In the aforementioned, the emotional leitmotif in Saartjie's vocals has an indexical function: in this instance, this particular leitmotif points to Saartjie's frustration with the degrading experience she receives from the Parisians.

⁷⁵ Many ditties were invented about Saartjie during her stay in England, such as the one in Plate 5 (Harding, n.d.)

Example 20: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section II, bars 209³–228¹. Saartjie’s reaction to the Parisians’ song

The musical score for Example 20, from Hofmeyr's 2009 work *Saartjie*, Section II, covers bars 209 to 228. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with vocal lines. The instruments and parts shown are:

- Flute (Fl.):** Bars 209-219, featuring triplets and dynamic markings like *f* and *ff*.
- Clarinet (Cl.):** Bars 209-219, mirroring the flute's melodic line.
- Bassoon (Bsn.):** Bars 209-219, providing harmonic support.
- Trombone (Tbn.):** Bars 209-219, with dynamic markings *f* and *ff*.
- Trumpet (Tpt.):** Bars 209-219, with dynamic markings *mf* and *f*.
- Percussion (P.S. T.M.):** Includes a snare drum (T.M.) and a suspended cymbal (P.S.) with a wooden stick. Annotations include "Platto sospeso con bacchetta di legno (wooden stick)" and "Death leitmotif".
- Violins (Vn. I, II):** Bars 209-219, with dynamic markings *f* and *ff*.
- Viola (Vl.):** Bars 209-219, with dynamic markings *f* and *ff*.
- Cello (Vc.):** Bars 209-219, with dynamic markings *f* and *ff*.
- Double Bass (Cb.):** Bars 209-219, with dynamic markings *f* and *ff*.
- Vocal Lines:**
 - Saartjie:** Bars 209-219. Lyrics include "The revellers burst out into raucous laughter, cheering and whistling." and "You dir - ty - min - ded dogs." A box highlights "Saartjie's emotional leitmotif".
 - Tenor (T.):** Bars 209-219, with lyrics "to you I am no more than this!". A box highlights "Saartjie's emotional leitmotif".

Key annotations and markings throughout the score include:

- Saartjie's emotional leitmotif:** A recurring melodic motif in the flute, bassoon, and vocal lines.
- Death leitmotif:** A rhythmic motif in the percussion and some string parts.
- Dynamic markings:** *f* (forte), *ff* (fortissimo), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *and.* (andante).
- Tempo/Performance instructions:** "Platto sospeso con bacchetta di legno (wooden stick)", "The revellers burst out into raucous laughter, cheering and whistling.", "She turns to the mirror and tears off her cloak."

(863)

The Hottentot Venus;

A NEW SONG.

Tune—We'll go no more a roving so late in the night.

LONDON is a puppet show, where curious sights are seen,
And at their head the *Hottentot* unruly stands the Queen;
There are giants, dwarfs, and singing-birds, which all are but a hum,
Compar'd to Venus on the stage, exhibiting her bum.

CHORUS.

We'll go no more to other shows while Venus treads the stage,
We'll go no more to other shows while *Hottentot's* the rage.

His fam'd Museum *Bullock* boasts, with *Leopardallis* skin
From Africa, which he's got stuff'd to gull the people in;
Of Nature's great phenomenon imported from that shore
To Britain's Isle, the *Hottentot* above them all must soar.

Pideck who long has bore the bell, as general in the field
Of lions, tigers, cats and wolves, does now to Venus yield:
The fashionables too, we find, are stirring every stump,
With pads, and hoops, and petticoats to imitate her rump.

Our rival Theatres each night produce a something new,
But Covent-Garden soon, we hear, will bring to public view
A Pantomime to please the town, we're told 'tis wond'rous fine,
The *Yorkshire Giant Harlequin*, and *Venus Columbine*.

Old *Mother Parker* now no more need figure in the dance,
Grimaldi too, with his grimace, may cease to skip and prance;
Even *Siddons*, as *Melpomene*, we fear must quit the stage,
And *Glover* too, as *Thalia*, since Venus is the rage.

The Opera has ceas'd to please, and so has *Catalani*,
With all her demi-semi-quavers, fortes and piano;
Her vile Italian squeaks indeed, compared to *Sartje's* fine tones,
Are just like fiddles out of tune, or sharp'n'g knives on grindstones.

Mr. Scott who leads the Sans Par-eil as Jean le Lowland romp,
We've seen as *Mary* of the Inn, in all her tragic pomp,
In either part the *Hottentot* that Lady would out-shine,
But she's a Venus, and we all must bow to her fair shrine.

Poor Polly with great *Marmion* has long since tir'd the town,
And Denmark's prince he's now brought on, it hopes it may go down;
But what are princes, warriors, chiefs? Why they're not worth a groat,
They must all yield to that damn'd jade, the *Female Hottentot*.

The Boottred Knight will take no more, nor yet the Pony Race,
And *Sully's* Wells with all its charms, to Venus must give place;
Spin, *Gardner*, its attractions now appear but shilly-shally,
To Venus at the Lottery Office held at Piccadilly.

In days of yore, when *Gurrick* reign'd, with *Prichard* and *Dame Chiss*,
Who sold red *Silster*, *Weston*, *Yates*, the town was kept alive;
A drolling play was then to men of sense a feast,
But now a *Hottentot's* the rage—good Lord, how chang'd is taste!

C. Berry, Printer, Norwich.



(864)

How blest The British Sailor.

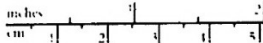
THO' cloudy skies and storms appear,
The sailor's heart is blithe and gay,
No pain he feels, no dangers fear,
But merry fings this roundelay:
When safe on shore,
All cares are o'er,
Where beauty's smile,
Rewards his toil,
How blest the British sailor.

From love alone my cares arose,
When late I went more wealth to seek,
Like dew-drops on the damask rose,
The tears look'd bright on Nelly's cheek,
Now safe on shore,
Her cares are o'er,
Where beauty's smile
Rewards my toil:
How blest the constant sailor.

The sailor's duty he performs,
Rewarded by the fair one's love,
Her smiles are sunshine after storms,
That clouds of anxious doubts remove,
When safe on shore,
All cares are o'er,
Where beauty's smile
Rewards his toil,
How blest the British sailor.

Shelton & Sons, printers.

W. H. Harding



Bodleian Library

Frame:

09699

AB

Plate 5: Harding, *The Hottentot Venus; a new song*, 1757–1807. Broadside. C. Berry Printers, Norwich. Shelf no.: Harding B 25(863). Bodleian Library, Oxford

The particular action of Saartjie discarding her cloak is a decent indexical sign because of the actual and physical existence found on the stage. This action is, in turn, supported by the upward and succeeding downward motion found in the flute, clarinet, and cor anglais (06:46–06:49, Example 21, bars 224^{lb}–227¹). The death leitmotif, which coincides with the aforementioned action, presents a prolepsis that is found *outside* the primary narrative of the monodrama. This particular prolepsis points to Cuvier boiling Saartjie’s flesh off her skeleton to later mount the skeleton, which was placed next to the plaster cast of her body while being exhibited at the *Museè de l’Homme* (see Plate 3).

*Voilà la belle Venus Hottentote,
C’est vraiment une tendre gelinotte!*

Saartjie drags her cloak behind her, throws it on the floor in disgust, and walks salaciously to the back of the chaise longue – the downward motion in the orchestra supports Saartjie walking while dragging her coat behind her (06:59–07:03, Example 1, bars 235³–237: trumpet, trombone, timpani, and temple blocks).

Example 21: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section II, bars 231–237. Saartjie discards her cloak in disgust

The musical score for Example 21 consists of several staves. The top staves are for the woodwinds: Cor Anglais (Cr. in fa), Trumpet (Tr.), and Trombone (Trbne.), all marked with *f* and *ff* dynamics and *f* *ruvido*. The Timpani (Timp.) part includes a glissando and a change from *mp* to *f*. The Bassoon (Bl. Cin.) part is marked *f* and includes the instruction "Blocchi di cinesi (Temple blocks)". The vocal part (Saar.) is marked *molto riten.* and includes the lyrics: "Voi-là la bel-le Vé-nus Hot-ten-to-te, C'est vraiment u-ne ten-dre ge-li-not-te!". The orchestral strings (Vn. I, Vn. II, VI, Ve.) are marked *pizz.* and *f* *ruvido*, with some parts marked *gliss.* and *sempre sim.*. The score also includes performance instructions like "III. gliss." and "IV. G".

*The Venus Hottentot!
Voluptuous monster,
beast from darkest Africa,
creature of your wildest fantasies!
[She fights for breath and sinks into the chair.
The sound of the revellers disappears into the distance.]*

As seen in Example 22, Hofmeyr employs the lower registers of the female soprano voice, while Saartjie comments on *how* the French see her. She places one foot on the chaise longue, much like a savage – according to European conventions – would do, and swings her body quite seductively, pulls grimacing faces, and gesticulates with her hands, as to come across as a monster (07:03–07:24, Example 22, bars 229³–253). The “orchestration [which] is deliberately grotesque and excessive and so combinations of instruments in extreme registers and strange phantasmagorical colours and so forth [can be heard]” (Hofmeyr, 2014)⁷⁶ gives the delivery a dark and snide quality. In addition to the music and orchestration, Hofmeyr (2014) employs the “lowest notes and chested notes of the female [soprano] voice to portray this kind of almost savage way in which the world views her”. This technique was initially used in Example 16, during Saartjie’s reflection upon her visit to Cuvier’s laboratories at the *Jardin du Roi*.

The terms *Voluptuous monster... beast... creature* (Example 22) all fall within Cuvier’s discipline of *comparative anatomy*, reducing Saartjie to nothing more than a mere scientific experiment. Saartjie’s delivery in Example 22 (07:04–07:22) spans over a wide tessitura: thirteenth from D₄ to G₃. This, in turn, can be quite taxing on a singer. Instead of following the opening structure, where the emotional leitmotif strenuously rises to reach a compound interval of a thirteenth, the leitmotif ‘fails’ to attain this height and ‘falls’ down with every successive utilisation. Of further interest, the altered employment of Saartjie’s emotional leitmotif (indicated with a square bracket below the notes) in bars 239³–240³: utilises a *rising* diminished second (D₄–E^b₄), bars 243³–245² utilises a *falling* diminished seventh (C[#]₅–D[#]₄), bars 246¹–249¹ uses a *falling* diminished seventh (B₄–C[#]₄). The final rising diminished seventh in bar 251 (A^b₄–G₅), indicates Saartjie’s growing distress and frustration.

Example 22: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section II, bars 239³–253. Saartjie’s vocal extract showing the use of female soprano chest voice and altered emotional leitmotif

Hofmeyr (2014) stated during the interview that he did not explicitly aim to refer to Cuvier’s writings although he “read all the famous excerpts that are quoted in relation to Saartjie [Baartman]”. The aim was to keep the references to Cuvier’s writing at the level of Saartjie’s comprehension of the visit to Cuvier’s laboratory (Hofmeyr, 2014). I find it necessary, though, to briefly expand on Cuvier’s writings as the intertextual references contribute the understanding and context of the text.

⁷⁶ The example only shows the use of the female chest voice

Jay (1993:8) postulated the following, concerning human observation: “the human eye has a blind spot where the optic nerve connects with the retina... The blind spot’s existence suggests a metaphoric ‘hole’ in vision”. Cuvier would soon fill this metaphoric hole in the vision of Europe, as Saartjie “will be placed in the European system of representation as a highly developed animal, and then closely scrutinized in order to determine her relationship to other animals and humans. She will be used as a yardstick by which to judge the stages of Western evolution, by which to identify difference and progress” (Sharpley-Whiting, 2007:309). From this, we can clearly see a notion of self-congratulation (on the part of Cuvier) and hostility (towards Saartjie), as pointed out by Said (1978:325).

Prior to commencing his autopsy, Cuvier prepared a plaster cast of Saartjie’s body (see Plate 3), which was on display next to her skeleton, in Case No. 33 at the *Musée de l’Homme*, until 1974 (Kirby, 1949:60; Kirby, 1954a:319). Saartjie’s genitals were also preserved in glass jars by Cuvier.

After Saartjie’s death, Cuvier dissected her body and published his observations in 1817, in *Memoires du Muséum d’Histoire Naturelle*,⁷⁷ entitled *Extrait d’Observations: Faites sur le Cadavre d’une femme connue à Paris et à Londres sous le nom de Vénus Hottentotte*.⁷⁸ Here Cuvier’s report was published as his initial observations however it was republished seven years later again, in 1824, in the first volume of *Histoire naturelle des mammifères: avec des figures originales, coloriées, dessinées d’après des animaux vivans*⁷⁹ in collaboration with Saint-Hillaire. The 1824 publication included two plates (see Plate 6 and Plate 7 respectively) of Saartjie Baartman preceding the entry and the title of the entry was also changed to *Femme de race de Boschimanne*.⁸⁰ This pointed out that the initial hostility toward Saartjie as an *other* in Europe was not enough and thus she was further ridiculed by placing her in a book alongside animals.

⁷⁷ Memoires of the Museum of Natural History

⁷⁸ Excerpt from Observations: Made on the Cadaver of a woman known in Paris and London under the name of Venus Hottentot

⁷⁹ Natural history of animals: with original coloured figures drawn from live animals

⁸⁰ Woman of the Bushman race

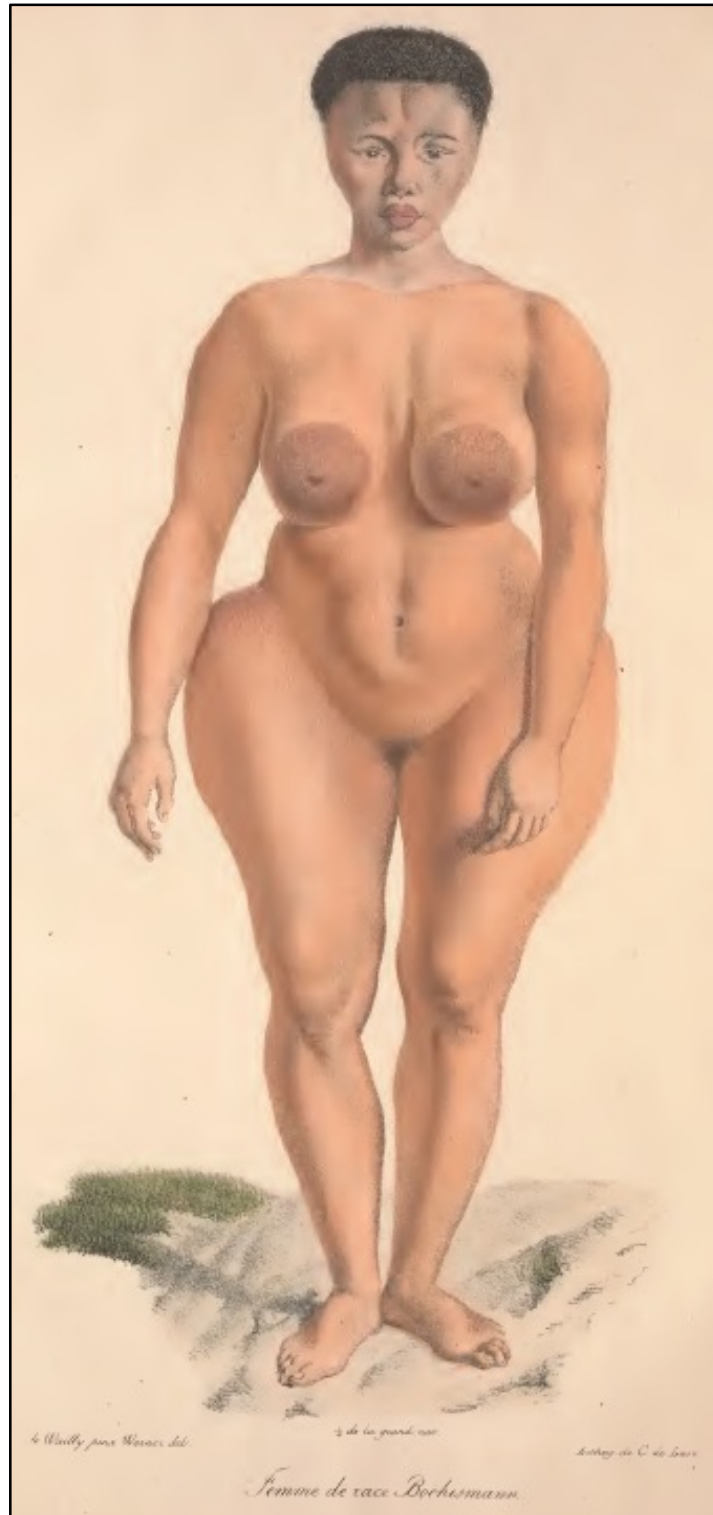


Plate 6:

C. de Last, 1824(1815)a. *Femme de race Bochimann [de face]*. Lithograph, size unknown. Published in *Histoire naturelle des mammifères : avec des figures originales, coloriées, dessinées d'après des animaux vivans*, verso.



Plate 7:

C. de Last, 1824(1815)b. *Femme de race Bochismann [de profil]*. Lithograph, size unknown. Published in *Histoire naturelle des mammifères : avec des figures originales, coloriées, dessinées d'après des animaux vivans*, verso.

Cuvier (1817:263) initially described Saartjie in positive terms, commenting on her cheerful character, good memory and facial recognition, tolerable Dutch conversational skills, as well as basic knowledge of English, and a small amount of French.

This relatively positive description of Saartjie would change drastically throughout Cuvier's autopsy report, as his work became increasingly racist and degrading. Cuvier (1817:264) was taken aback by Saartjie's physiognomy – he describes her face as a combination of Negroid and Mongolian, and “her eyes were black and fairly vivid; her little blackish lips, bulged monstrously strong with a swarthy complexion. Her ears were compared with that of several monkeys, due to its smallness, and the weakness of her tragus”⁸¹. Saartjie's body – and especially skeleton – also provided Cuvier with ‘material’ to compare her to a monkey: he compared Saartjie's pelvic bones alongside those of black and white women (he did not specify which countries the skeletons of these women were from). He found Saartjie's pelvis closer to that of black women however, after he considered all the facts, he states that Saartjie's pelvis was proportionally smaller and finally concluded that Saartjie was closer in relation to female monkeys (Cuvier, 1817:269). Saartjie's brain was not of particular interest to Cuvier (1817:271) and only a brief remark was offered in his autopsy report, regarding the shortening of the brain's anterior lobe due to a depression of the cranium.⁸² This did not warrant any further comment from Cuvier either.

From the extracts provided in Cuvier's autopsy report, it can be seen that this gave European men the power to exert their innate superiority of their own European and racial intelligence and also elevating European women by pointing out the otherness in black females (Mitchell, 2010:41).

Is this all that remains of me?

Saartjie's delivery (07:24–07:48) of this phrase is highly dramatic, with her vocal range spanning an eleventh from the highest note (B₅) to the lowest (F[#]₅). By using the death leitmotif (07:26–07:28, Example 23, bars 256–257¹), Hofmeyr strengthens the dramatic delivery of *is this all that remains of me* to point to the inhumanity Saartjie was subjected to in Paris and the events leading up to that time. In bars 259–263, Saartjie's emotional leitmotif is presented in an altered form: three succeeding intervals of a second each is employed, as opposed to the minor second step to a major sixth leap. This leitmotif points to the bitterness Saartjie feels toward both her situation and the Parisians. The breath leitmotif (07:38–07:47, bars 260^{1b-3}, 261^{1b-3}, 262^{1b-3}) is rhythmically altered to a quaver–dotted-crotchet–quaver pattern, as opposed to the original of a triplet rhythm consisting of a staccato quaver on the last beat of a triplet, followed by two slurred quavers (see Example 3 in 4.5.2.2). This is a succinct symbolic gesture pointing to Saartjie's exhaustion and with her frustration at being a topic of discussion by the Parisians, and the French in general. Scully and Crais (2008:323) pointed out that Saartjie's body became an ethnographic sample and truth in

⁸¹ “Son oreille avait du rapport avec celle de plusieurs Singes, par sa petitesse, la faiblesse de son tragus, et parce que son bord externe était presque effacé à la partie postérieure.” (in the original French)

⁸² “Excepté le rapetissement du cerveau à sa partie antérieure, qui résulte de la dépression du crâne à cet endroit, je n'ai fait sur les parties molles aucune remarque qui mérite d'être rapportée.” (in the original French)

the eyes of the English (see Plate 1, Plate 2, Plate 5), and more so for the French (Plate 3, Plate 4, Plate 6, and Plate 7). Rather than acknowledging her as a human being, the *Hottentot Venus*, which was an act, became seen as the *real* Saartjie Baartman.

Example 23: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section II, bars 255¹–263. End of Section II, Saartjie’s expression of bitterness towards her treatment in Paris

The musical score for Example 23 consists of several staves. The vocal line (Saar.) is at the bottom, with lyrics: "Is this all that re - mains of me?". Above it are staves for Cr. Ing., Cl. B., Cfg., Cr. in fa, Tr., Trbne., and Timp. The score includes various musical markings such as "rall poco a poco", "Solo", "mf", "mp", "via sord.", "Solo senza sord.", "Breathing leitmotif", and "Death leitmotif". The percussion part (Timp.) includes the notation "I: F II: A III: Eb IV: F".

4.5.6 Section III (bars 264–332¹)

Saartjie reminisces about her child- and adulthood, and eventually consoles herself with the traditional Afrikaans folksong, *Al lê die berge nog so blou*.

*Where is the Saartjie that dreamed by the
Gamtoos and mingled her song with the call of
the birds?*

This section employs two literary techniques, *analepsis* or *flashback* and the *anamnesis*. Saartjie thinks back to her childhood, as seen in 07:49–09:14 (Example 24, bars 264–275), which is also an *anamnesis* as she is harking back to previous experiences. The flowing accompaniment in the upper section of the first violins, as well as the rest of the viola, cello, and double bass, resembles a flowing stream, which, in turn, I deem to be a *qualisign*, as it appears to *sound* like a flowing stream. I interpret this particular form of accompaniment, along with Saartjie’s vocals, as an *anamnesis* – Cuddon (2003:34) asserted that the term refers to the “recollections of ideas, people or people (in a previous existence)”. Furthermore, this particular technique is quite widespread, especially in autobiographies and memoirs.

During the delivery of the anamnesis, Saartjie holds the *ramkie* however she does not play it. The *ramkie* is an indexical sign, which points to Saartjie's *otherness* to the Europeans and expresses her as an *exotic other* – another testament to her entrapment. Moreover, Saartjie's entrapment in her thoughts and in her situation are symbolically brought to the fore by superimposing the entrapment leitmotif in the second set of first violins' and second violins' static beamed notes (Example 24, bars 264–276).

In Example 24, the cor anglais introduces a plaintive melody (bars 264–7 and 275–6^{1b}), which, in turn, is employed in a rhythmically altered fashion in Saartjie's vocals (bars 248–275 and 277–286), to mimic Saartjie mingling *her song with the call of the birds*. The cor anglais's solo in Example 24 (bars 264–267 and 275–276) is an actant and points to a feeling of yearning and, as such, I label it the *yearning actant*.⁸³ I label the yearning actant as a rhematic iconic qualisign: it induces the feeling of yearning in the addressee and, in turn, also points to Saartjie's longing to return home.

Lévi-Strauss (1966:204) stated

birds love freedom; they build themselves homes in which they live a family life and nurture their young; they often engage in social relations with other members of their species; and they communicate with them by acoustic means recalling articulated language. Consequently everything objective conspires to make us think of the bird world as a metaphorical human society.

From the observation above by Lévi-Strauss (1966:204), on the deeper symbolical level, by *a posteriori* cultural convention, birds stand for a multitude of meanings, including, but not limited to, freedom and peace. However, Saartjie would not experience freedom or peace during her life or even after her death.

Saartjie's analepsis as she thought back to her childhood is ended and her thoughts return to the present time and to Daniel – her lover from the Cape. As she sings about Daniel, she moves to the front corner of her room, picking up a framed picture or portrait (09:15–09:41), and she looks at it briefly, then holds it to her chest. The framed portrait is an index pointing and strengthening Saartjie's feelings of loneliness and longing for her lost lover.

⁸³ The cor anglais is an alto instrument in the double reed woodwind family and has a “*melancholy, dreamy and rather noble voice, the tone of which possesses a vague, remote quality that renders it superior to all others in exciting regret, and reviving images and sentiments of the past, when the composer desires to touch the secret chords of tender memories*” (Berlioz, 1882:96, own italics added).

Example 24: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section III, bars 264–276 Detail of Saartjie’s anamnesis in combination with the entrapment leitmotif

The musical score is divided into two systems, each containing seven staves. The first system covers bars 264 to 269, and the second system covers bars 270 to 276.

System 1 (Bars 264-269):

- Cr. Ing. (Crown Instrument):** Solo, *mp*, *espressivo*. Tempo markings: *Largo espressivo, con rubato* (♩ = c. 48-52), *poco rall.*, *a tempo*.
- Saar. (Soprano):** *Largo espressivo, con rubato* (♩ = c. 48-52), *poco rall.*, *a tempo*. Lyrics: "Where is the Saar - tjie who".
- Vn. I & II (Violins):** *Illegible* (1st stand) *ppz. sul tasto*, *ppp*. Tempo markings: *poco rall.*, *a tempo*.
- VI (Viola):** *ppp*. Tempo markings: *poco rall.*, *a tempo*.
- Vc. (Violoncello):** *unilt piz. sul tasto*, *ppp*.
- Cb. (Contrabasso):** *[Div a 2]*, *ppp*. Tempo markings: *poco rall.*, *a tempo*.

System 2 (Bars 270-276):

- Cr. Ing. (Crown Instrument):** *mp*, *espressivo*. Tempo marking: *Solo*.
- Saar. (Soprano):** Lyrics: "dreamed by the Gam - toos And min - gled her song with the call of the birds?".
- Vn. I & II (Violins):** *ppp*.
- VI (Viola):** *ppp*.
- Vc. (Violoncello):** *ppp*.
- Cb. (Contrabasso):** *ppz.*, *unilt piz.*

*Where are those other New Year's Eves
those nights of song and dance and laughter
with my Daniel at the Tavern of the Seas?
Daniel, my darling drummer-boy,
do you remember me still?
Do you remember Saartjie,
and how she sang for you?*

Either the Tavern of the Seas, which Saartjie refers to, may be interpreted as a tavern by that name or the name bestowed upon Cape Town by travellers en route to India and the Far East. Cape Town was referred to as the *Tavern of the Seas* and as Ward (2007:139) observes; the name may have originated with the Dutch of the Cape as *de Indische Zeeherberg* (*the Indian Sea Inn/Tavern*). The name was already known when Swedish botanist-surgeon, Carl Peter Thunberg described *de Indische Zeeherberg* as “[a]n inn for travellers to and from the East Indies ... may here get refreshments of all kinds, and are then about halfway to the place of their destination, whether homeward or outward bound” (Thunberg, 1772? cited by Pinkerton, 1814:46; Ward, 2007:139).

[She takes up the ramkie.]
*Al lê die berge nog so blou,
Al lê die berge nog so blou,
Al lê die berge nog so blou,
Sy woorde sal ek steeds onthou.*

Al lê die berge nog so blou is the first of three arias in the monodrama. The orchestration in Example 25, according to Hofmeyr (2014), is composed in such a way that it resembles the effect of a strummed instrument, such as the *ramkie*. Hofmeyr’s original intention was to employ the harp however the producers did not allow any other instruments other than the instruments proscribed for the *Five:20*-project. Hofmeyr (2014) further stated that “the use of the vibraphone and the pizzicati and even the hummed chorus was supposed to be a kind of operatic reinterpretation of what a strummed instrument might have sounded like as an accompaniment to a voice in that particular moment”.

During the introduction of this plaintive song (09:42–10:12, Example 25, bars 301–303² and 311), the clarinet, humming choir, and orchestra enter. The nostalgic counter-melody, which is based on the original melody of *Al lê die berge nog so blou*, is played first by the clarinet, briefly by the cor anglais, and lastly by the piccolo. The counter-melody and the lush, augmented chords in the vibraphone strengthen the emotion of longing. Furthermore, the counter-melody is an actant, which is associated with the emotion of longing. *Al lê die berge nog so blou* is for Hofmeyr (2014) “emblematic of the kind of melancholic strain that one finds in some Afrikaans folksongs and I thought it’s particularly appropriate for her condition of nostalgia and longing for a love that was lost”. Saartjie picks her cloak up and walks around the chaise longue, looking at the picture. She delivers the song, singing it to the picture, while seated on her cloak on the floor.

This song is also an intertextual reference to the original Afrikaans song, which consists of four verses, although only the first and the last are employed in the opera. The counter-melody, as pointed out in 4.5.2.5

(see Example 7), present in the clarinet, is employed to furnish the music with a tender quality and a “condition of nostalgia and longing for a love that was lost” (Hofmeyr, 2014). By repeating the same verse three times (*al lê die berge nog so blou*), a feeling of loneliness and removal is invoked in the addressee – this points to the mountains, in combination with the nostalgia actant, being a *qualisign*. Firstly, it creates the feeling of distance between Saartjie and her beloved country, secondly a feeling of removal from her lover, Daniel, in the Cape. Moreover, Zerbst (2016) pointed out that the aim of including this particular song was to strengthen Saartjie’s nostalgia for her home in South Africa, which is “a very important facet of the monodrama (the moving back and forth in time and highlighting the realities of two distinct places, France and South Africa)”.

Cirlot (1971:219) expounded that different meanings have been attached to the symbolism and meaning of mountains due to each of its component elements: its height, verticality, mass, and shape. Hölderlin (cited in Ferber, 2007:132), in his poem *The Rhine*, referred to the Alps as “the fortress of the heavenly ones / ... from where / in secret much is firmly / Handed down to men”. *The mountains that lie so blue in the distance* is on a more spiritual level. It is a reference to the journey Saartjie will have to undertake to reach her loved ones in the “Great Beyond” (line 154), as she has to ascend the mountains to “the fortress of the heavenly ones” (Hölderlin cited in Ferber, 2007:132).

Saartjie addresses this song to Daniel – who is only present in her mind, and not on the stage. This song functions first and foremost as a love song from one lover to another, especially when one views it in combination with the second verse. However, looking deeper, although this song is a traditional Afrikaans love song, Saartjie could also easily be referring to South Africa as her ‘lover’ whom she has lost – being far away from home and all things familiar, she longs to be in South Africa (compare her reminiscing about mixing her song with the birds’ at the Gamtoos River, see Example 24, bars 268–275).

Example 25: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section III, bar 295⁴–311. Extract from Saartjie’s plaintive song *Al lê die berge nog so blou*

Sognante $\text{♩} = c. 52-56$

295 [P] Clarinetto in la Solo
mp espressivo
Nostalgia actant

Saar. $\text{♩} = c. 52-56$
Al

S. *ppp a bocca chiusa (hummed)**

MS. *ppp a bocca chiusa (hummed)**

T. *ppp a bocca chiusa (hummed)**

Bar. *ppp a bocca chiusa (hummed)**
**Più piano degli archi (Softer than the strings)*

Vn. I *Sognante ♩ = c. 52-56*
unifi pizz.
p

Vn. II *unifi pizz.*
p

Vi. *unifi pizz.*
p

Ve. *unifi pizz.*
p

Cb. *unifi pizz.*
p
arco

305

Cl. 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 Solo
mp
Nostalgia actant

Vibr. *Vibrafono motore acceso, bacchette morbide*

Saar. *lê die ber-ge nog so blou, al lê die ber-ge nog so blou, al lê die ber-ge nog so blou, jou woor-de sal ek steeds ont - hou.*

Vn. I

Vn. II

Va. *Entrapment leitmotif (altered)*

Ve. *Entrapment leitmotif (original)*

Cb.

*Al woon my bokkie nog so ver,
Al woon my bokkie nog so ver,
Al woon my bokkie nog so ver,
Dan troos ek my aan die môrester.*

The use of the hexatonic scale in the violins and violas adds a glittery, star-like quality to Saartjie's vocal line *aan die môrester* and symbolises the stars she saw as a child in South Africa. Hofmeyr placed the word *môrester* on the high E to give it further 'height', to symbolise that the morning star is high and far out of Saartjie's reach – further adding to the melancholy of the plaintive song, but also Saartjie's longing. In addition to this, the high E in Example 26 on *môrester* (*morning star*) also symbolically points to the 'journey' Saartjie will undertake to the Great Beyond. Secondly, it also points to the height of the mountains Saartjie refers to in the plaintive song. Hofmeyr (2014) justified this technical device in Example 26 as follow: "it's also an opportunity for the kind of vocality which one associates traditionally with opera where at the end of a song or an aria where one usually has a high note, which in this case the high note is justified by context of what she sang". Although this may seem to be a purely technical device on the part of the composer, it evokes the feeling of longing in the addressee as well, by the indication of *perdendosi* in the strings in bar 323.

The morning star is visible before sunrise and, in Example 26, Saartjie iconically and metaphorically compares Daniel to the morning star, a "light shining in the darkness" (Cirlot, 1971: 309). Having a drummer boy as a lover meant that he and his fellow drummers would act as the alarm clock, calling the regiment to the morning parade. It could be possible that during the times when Saartjie spent the night with Daniel, she would rise early with Daniel and most probably see the morning star making her way home (see close reading of bars 485–506, in Example 38, about the implication of being home in time for her duties at the Cesars household).

Example 26: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section III, bars 322–323. Detail of star leitmotif

The musical score for Example 26 shows the 'star leitmotif' in bars 322-323. The score includes parts for Vibraphone (Vibr.), Saarlout (Saar.), Violin I (Vn. I), Violin II (Vn. II), and Viola (Vi.). The Saarlout part has lyrics: 'mô re ster...'. The string parts feature a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets and 'perendosi' markings. The 'Star leitmotif' is indicated at the bottom of the string parts.

[She falls into a reverie, the ramkie
dropping into her lap.]
Daniel, do you remember?
Do you remember me, my dear?
And our darling girl – do you remember her?

Saartjie reminisces and ‘asks’ Daniel whether he remembers their daughter⁸⁴ (11:36–12:15, Example 27). The following extract *Daniel do you remember? / Do you remember, my dear?* is given further strength by the employment of the nostalgic counter-melody⁸⁵ in the cello part (11:56–12:15, Example 27, bars 324²–330).

⁸⁴ No concrete proof exists that Saartjie had a daughter with Daniel (Hendrik de Jongh) and, according to Crais and Scully (2009:47), a pregnancy did develop in 1804; nevertheless research cannot confirm whether the child was Hendrik de Jongh’s nor who assisted with the labour or whether Saartjie gave birth alone. There is also no concrete proof that any of Saartjie’s three children survived.

⁸⁵ The nostalgia actant was first introduced during the *Introduction*, see Example 7, bars 39²–40. The cello part is a copy of the melody found in Example 25, bars 297²–303.

Example 27: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section III, bars 324–331. Saartjie reminisces about her daughter and her lost lover Daniel (vocal and string section extract)

The musical score for Example 27 consists of several staves. The top staff is the vocal line for Saarl., with lyrics: "Da-niel, do you re-mem-ber? Do you re-mem-ber me, my dear? And our dar-ling girl do you re-mem-ber her?". The vocal line is marked with dynamics like *mp*, *p*, and *sempre*, and includes a *rall* marking. Below the vocal line are staves for Vn. I, Vn. II, VI, Vc., and Cb. The string parts are marked with *ppp sul tasto*, *arco*, and *mp espressivo*. The Vc. part has a marking *Nostalgia actant*. The Cb. part is marked *ppp sul tasto*.

4.5.7 Section IV (bars 332²–441)⁸⁶

The approaching Revellers, accompanied by drums, awaken Saartjie from her sleep. In her feverish delirium, she mistakes it for Daniel’s infantry and is heavily upset when she realises that it is merely the French Revellers singing. Because the opera is of a psychological nature, Saartjie is in a conversation of sorts simultaneously with and against the French Revellers. Saartjie tries to lift her spirits in the end by light-heartedly singing the third and final contemptuous waltz (see Example 32), which, in fact, fails to do so and she sinks in depression once more.

[A marching band is heard approaching from the distance, accompanied by people singing *La Marseillaise*. At the sound of the drumming, she starts up and rushes to the window.]

SAARTJIE:

Daniel, you’ve come back to me!

CHORUS:

Allons enfants de la Patrie,

Daniel! Daniel! Daniel!

Le jour de gloire est arrivé.

Where is he?

Contre nous, de la tyrannie,

Where is my drummer-boy?

L’étendard sanglant est levé.

So many people...

Entendez vous dans les campagnes

⁸⁶ There is a slight overlap in my division between Section III and Section IV. Saartjie’s vocals and accompaniment in the string section ‘ends’ Section III in bar 332¹ and Section IV then follows from bar 332² onwards however the field drum ‘overlap’ with one beat of Section III in bar 332 because it starts playing on the first beat of bar 332 (not shown in this example). It is not the intention of this study to present a detailed account of this overlap and to discuss this from a technical point of view.

Here comes the band now... No it isn't he!
[She turns away from the window in disgust.]

After her reverie, Saartjie is still lying on the floor, lost in thought. The approach and arrival of both the French Revellers and the marching band are signalled by the field drum (12:16, Example 28, bars 332¹–334³). The field drum beating serves a two-fold purpose: firstly, on the denotative level it signals people or an infantry approaching and, secondly, on the connotative level, it is a sign of time moving along for her, as presented by the death leitmotif. The beating drum is present all the time while the Revellers are singing *La Marseillaise*, strengthening the connotation of time never standing still but rather constantly ‘marching’ on for all humans. She starts up and rushes to the right-hand corner of her room, looking to see if she can see Daniel (12:30–12:37). She quickly runs to the left-hand corner of the room (12:39) and tries to see Daniel, then runs back to the right-hand corner (12:42).

La Marseillaise, the French national anthem, was written as a revolutionary marching song by Claude-Joseph Rouget de Lisle (1760–1836) in 1792. A battalion sang it from Marseilles when they entered Paris later in the same year. In 1792, it was adopted as the official anthem of France and has remained as such to this day. However, under the authority of both Napoleon, and Louis XVIII during the Second Restoration (1815), it was banned at the time Saartjie found herself in Paris (Halsall, 2007; Hofmeyr, 2009:2; Latham, 1990:738–739). Hofmeyr (2014) articulated that he employed and quoted *La Marseillaise*⁸⁷ as an ironic commentary and musical symbol on Saartjie’s position in which she found herself in Paris. This view is supported by Zerbst (2016), as the theme of “liberation from ‘the old slavery’ – yet Saartjie was a slave to her destiny. We [Zerbst and Hofmeyr, as librettists] felt this would have made for a powerfully dramatic moment”. Although the song is associated with the French Revolution and the ideas of “brotherhood of man and freedom, equality, liberty” (Hofmeyr, 2014), the French treat Saartjie in the complete opposite way during her time in Paris and even after her death.

The vocals in Example 28 and Example 29 are composed in such a way that Saartjie and the chorus are in an *ironic conversation* with one another. Certain words in *La Marseillaise* can be seen as references against Saartjie rather than the revolutionary message it proclaims. Saartjie reflects upon her own situation in Paris. Saartjie feels that *La Marseillaise* is aimed at her personally, as she is seen as the ‘impure’ blood (*Qu’un sang impur / Abeuve nos sillons* – Let their impure blood / drench our fields) and the ‘savage’ they refer to.

The French Revellers are dressed in period costume (Still 2), which provides the addressee with a visual reference to time (12:21–13:42). This visual, as well as acoustic references, place the opera in early nineteenth century Paris. The lighting above the Revellers, from left to right, bathes them in the colours of the tricolour French flag – blue, white, and red – a further symbolic reference attached to the Revellers

⁸⁷ In example 26 the viola part in bars 332³–334 has been reduced to fit on one staff – the second viola part is indicated in small notes. In the original this particular part was written over two staves.

singing their revolution-orientated anthem. The sign of time moving along for Saartjie is further symbolised by the Revellers marching to the music, all the while singing *La Marseillaise*.

Example 28: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section IV, bars 332³–344². Approaching Parisians and opening of *La Marseillaise*

[R] Alla marcia ♩ = c. 108-116

The score includes parts for Oboe (Ott.), Clarinet in G (Cr. Ing.), Clarinet in C (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Clarinet in F (Cr. in fa), Trumpet (Tr.), Trombone (Trbne.), Timpani (Timp.), Cymbal (C.R.), and Mace (Maj. (Two Flayers)).

Key performance instructions include *pp lontano*, *con sord. di fibra (fibre mute)*, *Casa rullante (Field/tenor drum - no snares) ricoperta d'una staffa (covered with a cloth)*, *ff*, and *Tutti uniti ord.*

Vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) sing: *Al-lons en-fants de la Pa-tri-e, Le jour de gloire est ar-ri-vé. Con-tre*

Soprano vocal line includes the lyrics: *Da-niel! you've back to me! Da niel! Da - niel! Da - niel!*

Below the vocal parts, the text reads: *The chorus, barely audible at first, gradually approaches from a great distance.*

[R] Alla marcia ♩ = c. 108-116

(Example continues on page 88)

(Example continued from page 87)

339 340 341 342 343 344

Ott. *cresc. poco a poco* *mf* *tr* *tr*

Cr. Ing. *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

Cl. *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

Fg. *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

Cr. in fa *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

Tr. *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

Trbne. *cresc. poco a poco* *mf*

Timp. *cresc. poco a poco* *mp*

C.R. *cresc. poco a poco* *mp*

Mar. *cresc. poco a poco etc.*

Saar. *mf* *f* *ff* *mf*
Where is he? Where is my drum-mer - boy? So ma - ny [etc.]

S. *ff*
nous, de la ty-ran - ni - e, l'é - ten - dard sang-lant est le vé, l'é - ten - dard sang - lant est le vé.

A. *ff*
nous, de la ty-ran - ni - e l'é - ten dard sang-lant est le vé, l'é - ten - dard sang - lant est le vé.

T. *ff*
nous, de la ty-ran - ni - e l'é - ten - dard sang-lant est le vé, l'é - ten - dard sang - lant est le vé.

B. *ff*
nous, de la ty-ran - ni - e l'é - ten - dard sang - lant le vé, l'é - ten - dard sang - lant est le vé.

Vn. I

Vn. II

VI.

Vc.

Cb.

*Mugir ces farouches soldats.
Just more Frenchmen singing hollow hymns
Ils viennent jusque dans nos bras
to freedom and fraternity...*

Saartjie is clearly disappointed that the Revellers are *just more Frenchmen singing hollow hymns / To freedom and fraternity* (12:51–12:59). She stands with her arms limp next to her sides – an *indexical* sign of the disappointment she faces in realising that it is not Daniel’s infantry approaching.

*égorger vos fils, vos compagnes.
To arms! indeed!
Aux armes citoyens!
And who is the oppressed?*

Saartjie raises her right hand in salute, along with the Revellers (*Aux armes citoyens!*), to symbolise the call to take up arms (12:59–13:12, Example 29). All the while, in the background, the Revellers are calling others to join their cause (*Formez vos bataillons*), while Saartjie stands with her open hand extended next to her sides (13:03–13:06) with her counter-answer *and who is the oppressed?* Example 29 presents an alteration of Saartjie’s emotional leitmotif, with adjustments in pitch, rhythm, and intervallic structure (bars 3553d–3621a).⁸⁸ The original emotional leitmotif is shown in Example 30 for the sake of comparison as seen originally in Example 2. Saartjie’s counter-answer, and the employment of the altered emotional leitmotif, raises and strengthens the confusion, disappointment, disillusionment, and the irony in the Parisians singing *La Marseillaise*, which is about freedom. All the while, Saartjie is captured in France, in both the scientific community’s and the Parisian public’s eyes and minds.

⁸⁸ Original intervals employed in the emotional leitmotif are as follow: ii^o–vi–iv^o–ii^o–vi–iii^o–ii^o–vi–ii.

Example 29: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section IV, bars 352^{3d}–363². Rearranged emotional leitmotif in the string section (vocal and string extract)

352 *ff* "To arms!" in - deed! And who is the op - pressed?

S. *ff* Aux ar - mes ci - toy - ens! For mez - vos ba - tail - lons, Mar -

C. *ff* Aux ar - mes ci - toy - ens! For mez - vos ba - tail - lons, Mar -

T. *ff* Aux ar - mes ci - toy - ens! For mez - vos ba - tail - lons, Mar -

B. *ff* Aux ar - mes ci - toy - ens! For mez - vos ba - tail - lons, Mar -

Vn. I *pizz.* *arco*

Vn. II *pizz.* *arco*

VI. *pizz.* *arco*

Vc. *pizz.* *arco*

Cb. *arco*

Saartjie's emotional leitmotif (altered)

357 Ah, Da - niel! Ah, Da - niel! Ah, save me! Save me! Save me from these pe - ople!

S. chons, mar - chons! Qu'un sang im - pur A - breu - ve nos sil - lons.

C. chons, mar - chons! Qu'un sang im - pur A - breu - ve nos sil - lons.

T. chons, mar - chons! Qu'un sang im - pur A - breu - ve nos sil - lons.

B. chons, mar - chons! Qu'un sang im - pur A - breu - ve nos sil - lons.

Vn. I

Vn. II

VI.

Vc.

Cb.

Example 30: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Introduction, bars 5–8. Saartjie's emotional leitmotif (violin part extract)

5 *Agitato e veemente* ♩ = c. 144-152

Vn. *f*

Formez vos bataillons,
 A, Daniel! Ah, Daniel!
Marchons, marchons!
 Ah, save me!
Qu'un sang impur
 Save me! Save me from these people!
Abeuve nos sillons.
 Free me from their prying eyes,
Amour sacré de la Patrie,
 free me from their smiles, their snickering,
 their songs!

Saartjie walks around the chaise longue and gets on her knees to pick up the framed picture (13:18–13:29). The crowd starts marching away (13:21), while Saartjie holds the picture against her chest, almost regarding it is a talisman that would be able to protect her against the Revellers. *Free me from their prying eyes* is pitted against the Revellers' *Amour sacré de la Patrie*, with the altered psychological leitmotif present in the string section once again. The crowd starts marching away to either side of the stage (13:20–13:41).

Conduis, soutiens nos bras vengeurs,
 Liberté, liberté chérie,
Liberté, liberté chérie,
 Combats avec tes défenseurs!...
Combats avec tes défenseurs!...
 Ah, tes défenseurs! indeed!
 [disappearing into the distance]
Combats avec tes défenseurs!...
 Ah, tes défenseurs, indeed!

Saartjie walks around the chaise longue, extending her right hand, balled in a fist, mocking the Revellers as they sing *Liberté, liberté chérie*, / *Combats avec tes défenseurs!* (13:30–13:41), and extends her middle finger (13:37–13:41) in response to *La Marseillaise* and all the ideals it represents.

I want no more of all their freedoms,
I want no more of their acclaim.

The upward surge in Example 31 in the string section (bars 375^{1b} and 377^{2b}–378) alternates between a minor second leading to a minor third (reminiscent of the emotional leitmotif), to the especially brief employment of the entrapment leitmotif, which strengthens Saartjie's discontent. This upward movement coincides with *I want no more of all their freedoms*, strengthening Saartjie's discontent. The words *freedoms* and *acclaim*, although both positive terms, are juxtaposed by the presence of the entrapment leitmotif in bars 376–371^{1a} and 379–381^{1a}. Saartjie contemplates the past five years she has spent abroad before Paris; she spent some four years on the stages of London and toured through England and Ireland (see 4.3.2).

Example 31: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section IV, bars 371³–381. Saartjie expresses her discontent with the French and herself being in France (vocal and strings extract)

The musical score for Example 31 consists of vocal and string parts. The vocal parts (Soprano, Contralto, Tenor, Bass) all sing the same lyrics: "Com-bats a-vec te dé-fen-seurs! I want no more of all their free-doms, I want no more of their ac-claim." The lyrics are in French and English. The string parts (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabasso) play a rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf* and *f*, and annotations like "Saartjie's emotional leitmotif" and "Entrapment leitmotif".

*Oh, Hendrik did you foresee all this,
when you brought me here?
Your promises of fame and fortune
entranced my all too eager ears.
I left all that was dear to me
to play the savage on a London stage.*

The final contemptuous waltz (14:13–14:31, Example 32) refers to Hendrik Cesar’s and Dunlop’s promise and ‘contract’ that Saartjie was to receive half of all monies earned from the shows (see Jolly & Moojen, 1810). Under English copyright law, Saartjie being the subject of the aquatints would also then be the copyright holder and was to receive the profits generated from the sales of these aquatints (Scully & Crais, 2008:318).

Saartjie picks the framed picture up from the chaise longue and moves across to the crate, while singing *I left all that was dear to me / to play the savage on a London stage* (14:23–14:31, Example 32). The action of placing the picture back into the crate is a *dicent indexical sinsign*, which not only points to Saartjie’s lost lover but also the life she has left behind to travel abroad.

Example 32: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section IV, bars 389³–406. Saartjie’s final contemptuous waltz contemplating her shows in England

Tempo di valzer ♩ = c. 144-152

Cl. 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398
 Saar. Your prom-i-ses of fame and for-tune en-tranced my all-too-ea-ger ears. I left all

Tempo di valzer ♩ = c. 144-152

Vn. I *mp*
gli altri pizz.
p

Vn. II *p*

Vl. *p*

Vc. *p* [Sempre simile]

Cb. *p*

Cl. 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406
 Saar. that was dear to me to play the sa-vage on a Lon-don stage.

Vn. I

Vn. II

Vl.

Vc.

Cb.

Now you’ve gone back...
 Oh, what a fool I’ve been!
 What made me stay in Paris,
 when I could have gone home with you?
 How gladly would I give all this
 for one day among my own?

Saartjie contemplates her foolishness for staying in Paris when she could have gone home. Her distress about her decision to rather stay behind is represented by the emotional leitmotif in Example 33, bars 412–421, which functions as a *dicent indexical sinsign*, drawing the addressee’s attention to her distress. Hendrik Cesars departed for Cape Town and she was ‘sold’ over to a handler of wild animals, S. Rèaux. Cesars and Rèaux struck a deal, of which the particulars are not known, during the time of Saartjie’s illness, and, about

two months into the year (1815), Hendrik Cesars departed. Saartjie thus ‘changed hands’ and her return to the stage “was announced on 22 January 1815” (Holmes, 2009:130). Rèaux was relentless in trying to make money by any means possible from showing Saartjie to anyone who was willing to pay. Her working days became very long – lasting from eleven in the morning until eleven at night – and to further promote Saartjie’s stage revival; Rèaux also ran a press campaign for more than a fortnight (Holmes, 2009:131). Whether Saartjie had given her consent to the matter is not clear.

Example 33: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section IV, bars 412–421. Saartjie contemplates her stay in Paris (extract)⁸⁹

The musical score for Example 33 is a full orchestral score for the opera *Saartjie*. It covers bars 412 to 426. The score is written for a variety of instruments: Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Ob.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Horns (Cr. in F), Trumpets (Tr.), Trombones (Tbn.), Saxophone (Sar.), Violins I (Vn. I), Violins II (Vn. II), Viola (Vi.), Cello (Vc.), and Double Bass (Cb.). The vocal line for Saartjie is also present, with lyrics: "Oh, what a fool I've been! What made me stay in Pa-ri-s, when I could have gone home with you?". The score includes dynamic markings such as *Piano*, *f*, *mp*, *cresc.*, and *rall.*. Several instances of "Saartjie's emotional leitmotif" are highlighted with boxes and annotations. The tempo and dynamics change throughout the passage, reflecting the emotional state of the character.

[Clutches her neck again]
It is too late!

Saartjie steadies herself with her right hand on the chaise longue, clutching her chest with her left, as she sings *it is too late!*, while both the death and entrapment leitmotifs are superimposed upon one another (15:15–15:26, Example 34, bars 436–441). Saartjie sings with a pained expression on her face, as she realises the calamity of her situation and starts to shimmer through and dawn upon her.

⁸⁹ The small notes in bars 412–414^{1b} and 417–421 are optional as indicated by the composer.

Example 34: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section IV, bars 436–441. Detail of the death leitmotif and entrapment leitmotif

The image displays a musical score for Example 34, covering bars 436 to 441. The score is arranged in a multi-staff format. The instruments and parts included are:

- Cl.** (Clarinet)
- Fg.** (Fagott)
- Cr. in fa [Div. a 2]** (Cornetto in F)
- Tr.** (Tromba)
- Trbne.** (Trombone)
- Timp.** (Timpani)
- T.T. G.C.** (Tutti Gran Cassa)
- Saar.** (Soprano)
- Vn. I** (Violin I)
- Vn. II** (Violin II)
- Vi.** (Viola)
- Ve.** (Violoncello)
- Cb.** (Contrabbasso)

Key features of the score include:

- Death leitmotif:** A recurring musical motif, first appearing in the Clarinet part at bar 436 and later in the T.T. G.C. part at bar 439.
- Entrapment leitmotif:** A recurring musical motif, first appearing in the Cello part at bar 436 and later in the Cello part at bar 439.
- Lyrics:** The Soprano part includes the lyrics: "It is too late!" and "Now only death can reunite me with my loved ones in the Great Beyond".
- Performance markings:** The score includes dynamic markings such as *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano), as well as tempo markings like *rall.* (rallentando) and *until*.

4.5.8 Section V (bars 442–507²)

The reality of Saartjie’s situation finally starts to dawn upon her, as she realises that she will most probably never return to South Africa. She employs the same reminiscing song about the Gamtoos Valley however she is more specific about some of the birds (loerie) and plants (aalwyn/aloe) she knew. She refers to the Khoisan traditions of giving thanks when one of their people has returned home after a journey or a successful hunting trip.

*The waters of the Gamtoos
will nevermore cool this brow,
I’ll nevermore hear the loerie’s call,
nor see the aalwyn’s flame.*

*Now only death can reunite me
with my loved ones in the Great Beyond*

Lines 148–152 are an allusion to lines 52–54 and Example 24 (*Where is the Saartjie that dreamed by the Gamtoos / and mingled her song with the call of the birds?*). In this extract (Example 35), however, Saartjie realises that her situation will not change and that she will most probably remain in Paris for the rest of her life.

During the introduction of the anamnesis, the clarinet introduces Saartjie's analepsis with a plaintive melody (15:27–15:42, Example 35, bars 442–445), which is the yearning actant. The clarinet's⁹⁰ solo melody is written in the key of C minor however, with the added G-flat, it alludes to E-flat minor, ergo a *doubling* of tonalities occurs, further strengthening the idea of yearning. The clarinet's introductory solo is employed in Saartjie's vocals (Example 35), with subsequent alterations of the clarinet's solo, presented in bars 445^{3b}–449² and 449^{3b}–453. Hofmeyr's orchestration in Example 35 is also more complex: in the violins, violas, and violoncellos, he makes use of a compound triple metre ($\frac{9}{8}$) superimposed upon a simple triple metre ($\frac{3}{4}$) in the rest of the instrumentation (clarinets, bassoons, horns in F, trumpets, trombones, vibraphone, contrabasses, and Saartjie's vocals). I interpret this superimposition as another indicator that Saartjie is experiencing a much stronger anamnesis and more clarity of mind at that given moment. The entrapment leitmotif is not present in this particular section however the complex cluster chords in the vibraphone evokes a feeling of yearning because of the unresolved nature of these particular chords. Saartjie crosses her hands over her shoulders, like one who is cold, and moves to the front of the chaise longue to wrap her cloak around her shoulders, for warmth and comfort, and seats herself.

According to Cirlot (1971:110), orange or yellow coloured flowers (such as the *aalwyn's flame*) represent, in terms of basic symbolism, the sun; while red flowers emphasise the relationship of love and passion, blood, and animals. The aloe's flower is, in fact, a cluster of small flowers, resembling a flame hence the reference to the *aalwyn's flame*. The symbol refers to Saartjie's passion for her home and her yearning to return home so that she may once again see the *aalwyn's flame* and hear *the loerie's call*. The harmonics present in the string section hint at the element of magic and the ethereal. This coincides with the words *Now only death can reunite me with my loved ones in the Great Beyond* (Example 36, bars 455^{2b}–459).

⁹⁰ Clarinets, can portray “the expression of sentiments and ideas the most poetic” (Berlioz, 1882:108).

Example 35: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section V, bars 442–452. Saartjie’s second anamnesis

V **Largo espressivo, con rubato** $\text{♩} = c. 48-52$
 Solo *mp* *espressivo* *poco rall.* *a tempo*
 Cl. 442 443 444 445 446 447 448
 Vibr.
 Saar. *poco rall.* *a tempo*
 The wa - ters of the Gam - toos will ne'er-more cool this
 V **Largo espressivo, con rubato** $\text{♩} = c. 48-52$
IV.a corda sul tasto *pp* *poco rall.* *a tempo*
 Vln. I *pp*
sul tasto *pp*
 Vln. II *pp*
sul tasto *pp*
 Vla. *IV.a corda sul tasto* *pp*
 Vc. *IV.a corda sul tasto* *pp*
 Cb. *pp*
 //
 Cl. 449 450 451 452 453 454
 Fg. *pp*
 Cr. in fa *pp*
 Tr. *Solo con sord. di metallo*
 Trbne. *con sord. di metallo* *pp*
 Vibr.
 Saar. *brow, I'll ne'er - more hear the loe - rie's call, nor see the aal - vyn's flame.*
 Vln. I *III.a corda*
 Vln. II *IV.a corda*
 Vla. *IV.a corda*
 Vc. *III.a corda*
 Cb.

On the literal level, Saartjie will be re-united with her loved ones in the afterlife, or the *Great Beyond*. On the symbolic level, this points to a prolepsis: it refers to Saartjie’s remains being transported back to South Africa, which is beyond the ocean from France. It took Saartjie four months to travel beyond the ocean to England (from March to July, 1810) (Crais & Scully, 2009:59–61) but it took her 187 years to return to her

rightful country – only after a new edict was passed in France with regards to this repatriation (Holmes, 2007:175; Le Garrec, 1990).

Example 36: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section V, bars 455–459. Prolepsis of Saartjie’s death and return ‘home’ to the Great Beyond

455 456 457 *rall.* 458 459

Ott. *pp* *Death leitmotif*

Cr. Ing. *Solo* *mp* *espressivo*

Cl. *pp* *Death leitmotif*

Fg. *Solo* *mp* *espressivo*

Timp. *pp* *tum-tam* *Gran cassa* *pp* *II: Ab*

T.T. *pp* *Death leitmotif* *muta in T-T e Cmpe.*

G.C. *pp*

Saar. *rall.* *3*
Now on - ly death can re - u - nite me with my loved ones in the Great Be - yond.

Vn. I. *I.o solo* *con vibrato*

Vn. II. *II.o solo*

Vl. *I.o solo* *con vibrato*

Vl. *II.o solo*

Ve. *dh.* *I.o solo*

Cb. *dh.* *con vibrato* *Entrapment leitmotif*

Sognante ♩ = c. 66-72

*Father, will you be there to greet me
with your hunter’s bow in hand?
Will you burn the fragrant buchu leaves
to give thanks for my return?*

The bow is a weapon that combines stealth, speed, and distance – since the earliest of times; the bow and arrow have been employed to play symbolic roles (Ferber, 2007:34). For the Khoisan, the bow and arrow is probably one of their most important possessions. The men who would go out and hunt while the women stayed behind to tend to the daily chores. With Saartjie’s burial in 2002, a Khoisan chief broke a bow and arrow and scattered them in her grave, as a traditional observance for the ancestors (Holmes, 2007:182–3). According to Ferber (2007:111), due to leaves being numerous and their mortality and susceptibility to the wind, they are a perfect emblem for the dead in the underworld. This ties in with the buchu leaves. Buchu is a medicinal herb that gives off a sweet smell when burned. The Khoisan burned buchu to give thanks to

the ancestors on a variety of occasions, such as on a successful hunt or at a burial to purify the deceased's spirit. The same was done for Saartjie, as well during her burial in 2002 (Holmes, 2007:182).

4.5.9 Section VI (bars 507³–599)

In this section, Saartjie thinks about her child (see 4.3.1 for the discussion regarding Saartjie's children) and consoles herself with a traditional Nguni lullaby. She falls asleep, as a clock strikes midnight in the distance. The Revellers celebrating New Year's Eve with raucous noise, while they are singing a ditty about her and *La Marseillaise*, which disturbs her sleep. Saartjie is feverish and delirious with fear, as canons are fired to herald the New Year. She falls to her knees and sings an ancient Khoisan prayer, beseeching *Gurub*⁹¹ to protect her. Saartjie's delirium is quietened by the *Voices of the Ancients*, singing to her to return home to her loved ones in the Great Beyond. Saartjie 'answers' to them and, shortly after, she passes away and the opera ends.

*And my darling girl, my Elsie,⁹²
will you be a baby still?*

These tender words contain the nostalgia actant, which is derived from *Al lê die berge nog so blou* (see Example 8 for a further discussion on this point). This actant is now personalised because it is present in Saartjie's vocals, as seen in Example 37 below:

Example 37: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section VI, bars 474–477². Nostalgia actant present in Saartjie's vocals

*Will I cradle you within these arms
as you nestle with your head against my breast?
[Folds her arms as if cradling an infant, and
sinks into the chair.]*

*Thula, thu, thula, thula, thula sana,
thul'umam 'uzobya ekuseni,
Thula, thula, babana...*

The second aria opens: *Will I cradle you within these arms / as you nestle with your head against my breast?* (17:32–17:47). Saartjie removes her cloak and starts folding it to resemble a baby swaddled in a blanket – an *indexical sign*. Saartjie's vocals allude to the Nguni lullaby, which she will sing shortly. The viola solo introduces the lullaby while Saartjie looks at her swaddled cloak as if it is indeed a baby (17:48–18:05, Example 38, bars 485–488^{3a}). Hofmeyr (2014) advised me that the compositional technique in this section

⁹¹ “!Gurub [...] means the coverer, and was one of the names of the thunder-cloud |*Nanub*, which covers the sky. (Hahn, 1881:128).

⁹² No concrete proof exists of a daughter named Elsie (see 4.3.1).

of the opera has a rather classical approach to the traditional African technique of call-and-response. This song can be classified as a strophic song, which means that the same material is used from one stanza to the next. While the original melody is still present in the orchestral accompaniment, Saartjie ‘embroiders’ around this melody of *Thula thu*. About this call-and-response technique, Noss (2004:517) stated that the soloist (Saartjie) is free to improvise as the choir (orchestra) responds with the same line after each solo.

A lullaby is sung to a child at night to calm them down for the night’s sleep and this particular lullaby refers to a mother returning to her child in the morning. However, before the mother can return to the child in the morning, they both have to experience and progress through the night. The symbolism attached to the night is the same as death and the colour black (Cirlot, 1971:288) and is dualistic in nature. The positive symbolism attached to night and death refer to “the transformation of all living things, the progress of evolution, dematerialization” (Cirlot, 1971:78); the negative connotations include the end of a period, depression and despondence, and the end of anything quantified (Cirlot, 1971:78). As one sleeps at night, night is also seen as an anticipation of the daylight (Cirlot, 1971:288). This all ties in with Saartjie’s lullaby – *mommy will be home in the morning*. As this close reading has pointed out earlier, Saartjie lost her children. The home here may have one of two meanings; firstly, a link to ‘going home’ to the Great Beyond and being reunited with her family and children who had died. As such, the lullaby refers to Saartjie’s own death – the eternal sleep. Secondly, home may refer to Cesar’s home, where she was employed as wet nurse to nurse their daughter, Anna Catharina. Saartjie’s lover was a drummer boy – and, consequently, an early riser to call the infantry to the morning parade – thus Saartjie would be able to rise early enough to go home to the Cesars and tend to her domestic tasks, which included employment as a wet nurse. Perhaps the child she promises to be home for is Cesar’s little daughter or her own children (Crais & Scully, 2009:47; Holmes, 2007:39–40).

Saartjie experiences both the negative and positive connotations of night time and death in the monodrama: as will be highlighted in the next few extracts, she will experience depression and despondence. The lullaby, which is associated with sleep and night-time, is also a prolepsis of Saartjie’s death in the final section.

Example 38: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section VI, bars 485–499. Saartjie sings the Nguni lullaby while reminiscing about her daughter

485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492

Fl. *ppp*

Cl. *ppp*

Fg. *ppp* Solo *mp expr. e legato*

Cr. in fa *ppp*

Mar. *pp*

Vibr. *pp*

Saar. *mp*
Thu-la, thu, thu-la, ba-ba, thu-la, sa-na, thul'u-mam'u-zo-bu-ya e-ku-se-ni.

VI. *ppp* *La sola II a corda* *div. a 3*

Ve. *ppp*

493 494 495 496 497 498 499

Fl. Solo *mp expr. e legato*

Cl. *mp expr. e legato*

Bsn. *mp expr. e legato*

Cr. in fa *ppp* *suoni d'eco (half stopped)*

Mar. *ppp* *muta in Cassa rullante*

Vibr. *ppp*

Saar. *ppp*
thu-la, thu, thu-la, ba-ba, thu-la, sa-na, thu-la, thu-la, ba-ba-na, thu-la, thu-la.

Vla. *ppp* *via sord.*

Ve. *ppp* *via sord.*

[As Saartjie falls asleep, a distant clock can be heard striking midnight. At the stroke of twelve, a crowd can be heard cheering, whistling and laughing in the distance. Saartjie, still half asleep, lifts her head.]

The passage of time is indicated by the tam-tam (large gong/cymbal) and bells (18:58–19:28, Example 39, bars 500–507) to simulate a distanced clock striking twelve, to indicate midnight. This places the opera in

a very specific time of the day. Night is usually associated with magic, unseen dangers and the like, but also melancholy and darkness (Ferber, 2007:137–8). In addition to this, the night is also associated with death (Ferber, 2007:138) and the tolling bell in the distance, in combination with the earlier reference to the time being New Years Eve, is an indexical death knell for Saartjie’s death at the end of the opera.

Example 39: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section VI, bars 500–506. Clock striking midnight and the entrance of the Parisians

What?! Where am I?!

MALE CHORUS:

Allons enfants de la Patrie,

FEMALE CHORUS:

Avez-vous vu la Vénus Hottentote?

Le jour de gloire est arrivé.

C'est vraiment une tendre gélinotte!

Contre nous, de la tyrannie,

Elle est venue d'Afrique pour faire la carrière,

L'étendard sanglant est levé.

Mais ici ne fait que montrer le derrière!

The two collocated Hofmeyr-choirs, and their respective accompaniments (Example 40), form an ironic juxtaposition. Saartjie is scurrying around her room in search of her bottle of brandy, which she finds out is empty (19:34–19:54). The juxtaposition of two seemingly unrelated songs are, in fact, related – given the

context of this section and Saartjie’s life in Paris, as portrayed in the opera. The female choir quote the simple song first heard in *Section I*, which symbolised the general Parisian and French public and their fascination with the *Hottentot Venus*; the male revellers symbolise *those frigid men of science (Section I)*. The scientists, and especially more so Cuvier, who conducted the dissection of Saartjie’s body, has symbolically raised the flag of tyranny against Saartjie. Saartjie Baartman ultimately “became a landscape on which scientists [Cuvier and Saint-Hillaire], showmen [Dunlop, Cesars and Rèaux], and artists [F. C. Lewis and C. de Last] meditated on nature and hierarchy and elaborated a discourse of civilization and barbarism” (Scully, 2008:561).

Example 40: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section VI, bars 510–513. Juxtaposed Parisian choirs

510 $\text{♩} = \text{c. } 54 - 58$ 511 512 513 514

Saar. What?! Where am I?

S. A - vez-vous vu la Vé - mu Hot - ten to - te? C'est vrai - ment u - ne ten - dre ge - li not - tel

MS. A - vez-vous vu la Vé - mu Hot - ten to - te? C'est vrai - ment u - ne ten - dre ge - li not - tel

C. A - vez-vous vu la Vé - mu Hot - ten to - te? C'est vrai - ment u - ne ten - dre ge - li not - tel

T. Al-lons en - fants de la Pa - tri - e, Le jour de gloire est ar - ri vé!

Bar. Al-lons en - fants de la Pa - tri - e, Le jour de gloire est ar - ri vé!

B. Al-lons en - fants de la Pa - tri - e, Le jour de gloire est ar - ri vé!

SAARTJIE [starting up at the sound of cannon- fire]:
Ah, the !nau is upon me!
 [Falls to her knees.]
 !Nanumatse! !Gari-khoi, !Gurutse!,
 ‡Ouse gobare, /havië t'am u-hā-tamaö;
 /Ubatare ‡outago Xuige.
 !Gurutse! /Nanus oatse!

The *!nau* actant was briefly introduced during the opening of the opera in *Introduction* (see Example 9, bar 1^{2b}). The concept of *!nau* (*ah, the !nau is upon me!*) is not a physical person nor is it easily definable in modern terms. Hoernlé (1918:65–82) studied certain rites of passage among the Khoisan people and published an article entitled *Certain rites of passage and the conception of !nau among the Hottentots*, about the *!nau* phenomenon. The term *!nau* refers to a person or the state a person is in, where the *!nau* person acquires certain characteristics not known in the group. The *!nau* person is no longer protected by the group’s solidarity and is exposed to danger from all over. The *!nau* person may also not be exposed to other people, animals, or water – although water cannot become *!nau*. The state of *!nau* is a very serious condition in the Khoisan life and religion – cases of *!nau* include puberty, the death of a spouse, and illness. The *!nau* person can also work all kinds of disruption in the group and thus has to be isolated and relieved from the *!nau* upon him/her. The *!nau* person is subjected to certain rites of passage to become part of the

‘new’ group he/she belongs to and to be part of the community once more. Only a qualified person who has endured and survived *!nau* may bring the *!nau* person back into the group. An animal struck by lightning is considered to be highly *!nau* and may not be eaten, except by the very oldest of the group (Hoernlé, 1918:67–69). With this summary from Hoernlé in mind, *!nau* in Saartjie’s case can be seen as agitation and possible delirium, brought on by the copious amounts of brandy she consumed toward the end of her life, as well as in the opera.

Saartjie raises her hands into the air to indicate that the *!nau* is upon her. Because the opera is of a psychological nature (Spies, 2010:82), it has to be taken into consideration, in the setting and context of the opera, that Saartjie is alone in her room. Saartjie, in her probable feverish disorientation, thinks that a thunderstorm (entrapment leitmotif, see Example 41, bars 520–521^{2a} and 523^{2a}–525¹) is approaching (*starting up at the sound of cannon-fire*). She beseeches *Gurub* to save her and keep her safe. As Saartjie has nobody else to turn to, *Gurub* is the only one who can ward off the *!nau*. The upward surge in the orchestra points to the anthropomorphic actant *!nau* and refers to Saartjie’s agitated state, while the entrapment leitmotif is presented in short two-bar phrases, at a time after each upward surge, representing the *!nau*. This all points to Saartjie being *captured* in her state of *!nau* (19:53–20:01, Example 41, bars 525^{2a}–527^{2a}, 528²–529^{1a}, 529^{1d}–530^{1a}, 532^{1d}–533^{2b}, 536^{1d}–537^{2b}, and 538²–539).

Canon shots and fireworks heralding the New Year; women singing a ditty about her; the talk of revolution in *La Marseillaise*, which is sung by the male chorus – all adds to the state of mental confusion Saartjie finds herself in. According to Zerbst (2016), the symbolism attached to the fireworks is employed to “juxtapose the painful loneliness Saartjie experienced with the carefree gaiety of a celebratory Paris – this would show her despair in a particularly stark manner”.

The third and final aria, a traditional hymn (see Example 41) (20:03–20:53) is a very dramatic prayer for Saartjie. Saartjie is on her knees while beseeching *Gurub*, which is a symbol of submission (20:00–20:56, Example 41). Prayers of adoration have positive connotations, while prayers of supplication and confession are branded with negative inferences (Whittington and Scher, 2010:60; Laird *et al.*, 2004:252). However, when considering the text and context of Saartjie’s prayer, these negativities are quite positive. From Hahn’s (1881:58–60) monograph, the Khoisan lived with great fear, adoration, and respect for *Tsüi-//goab* who is the “Father of fathers”. *Saartjie*’s prayer is rather one of pleading for grace and protection from the ‘outside’ elements, such as the strange noises (canon shots and revellers) outside her window. Hahn (1881) offered the following explanation of the Khoisan hymn to the thunder: “if a heavy thunderstorm is approaching, and the country is resounding from the roaring of the thunder, and the lightnings disperse the darkness, they also assemble for a |*gei*⁹³ and, while dancing, [they] sing [the hymn]” (Hahn, 1881:59).

⁹³ According to Hahn (1881:58), it is a religious dance.

Hofmeyr (2014) asserted that the language of the hymn is from the west of South Africa rather than the east, where Saartjie was born and grew up; furthermore, the music for the prayer was inspired by one of Princess Magogo's⁹⁴ bow songs, where this particular song "starts fairly high and goes fairly low in each individual phrase".⁹⁵ In the latter part of the traditional prayer, the accompaniment to Saartjie's vocal line is more varied, as she begs for forgiveness for her 'weakness'. The weakness she refers to may refer to the fact that she stayed in Paris rather than returning home to South Africa with Hendrik Cesars.

⁹⁴ Princess Constance Magogo Sibilile Manthithi Ngagenzinye Ka Dinzulu (1900–1984) was a "keen observer and upholder of Zulu culture and tradition Princess Magogo was regarded as an authority on Zulu music and is remembered as one of South Africa's greatest composers, musicians and singers" (The Presidency, s.a.). Her work was introduced to a wider audience by Hugh Tracey, who in 1939, made a number of recordings of her musical performances. Princess Magogo not only performed traditional songs, dating from King Shaka's time in the 19th century, but also her own musical compositions sung in the traditional Zulu style (The Presidency, s.a.).

⁹⁵ Upon further investigation, during the course of this dissertation, this song could not be found.

Example 41: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section VI, bars 514¹–532. Saartjie imagines she has contracted the *!nau* and Khoisan prayer (extract)

The musical score is arranged in a standard orchestral format. The top staves include Flute (Fl.), Oboe (Cr. Ing.), Clarinet (Cl.), Bassoon (Fg.), Cor Anglais (Cr. in Fa), Trombones (Timp.), Trumpets (G.C.), and Double Basses (C.R.). The bottom staves include Violins (Vn. I, Vn. II), Violas (Vl.), Cellos (Vc.), and Double Basses (Cb.).

Key annotations and markings include:

- Tempo:** $J = c. 66-72$
- Dynamic markings:** *ff*, *mf*, *mp*, *fp*.
- Performance instructions:** *frullato*, *aperta (aperta) gliss.*, *arco sul pont.*, *unidi*, *arco sul pont.*, *unidi*.
- Leitmotifs:** *Death leitmotif* (marked in C.R. and Vc.), *Entrapment leitmotif* (marked in Cb.).
- Vocal line (Saar.):** "At the sound of cannon-fire she starts up, chattering her throat." Lyrics: "Ah, the *!nau* is up - on me! (*t* = Cerebral click against the back palate) *nu-mat se!* *!Ga* -"

(Example continues on page 107)

(Example continued from page 106)

2

529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538

Fl.

Cr. Ing.

Cl.

Fg.

Cr. in fa

Timp.

G. C.

C. R.

Vibr.

Saar.

- ri khol, 'Gu - rut - se! zou - se go - ba - re, /Ha - vi - e t'am u - hä - tam - a - o;

(/ = dental click against the upper teeth)

Vn. I

Vn. II

VI.

Vc.

Cb.

[She clutches at her neck]
Ah, I cannot breathe!

The rhythmically altered breath leitmotif (20:59–21:05, Example 42) follows Saartjie’s traditional prayer. The alteration in this leitmotif points to Saartjie’s agitation, as well as her exertion (*poco accelerando* in the example), however she manages to calm herself down, seeing the stars (*rallentando* in the example).

Example 42: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section VI, bars 552–554. Rhythmically altered breath leitmotif

The musical score for Example 42 consists of the following parts and markings:

- Flute (Fl.):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *mp*, *cresc.*, *rall.*
- Oboe (Ob.):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *mp*, *f*
- Clarinet (Cl.):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *mp*, *f*
- Bassoon (Fg.):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *p*, *f*
- Saartjie (Vocal):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *rit.*, *ossia parlato (or spoken)*. Lyrics: "I can-not breathe!". Action: "She staggers to the window, collapsing to her knees as she reaches it."
- Violin I (Vn. I):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *pizz.*, *f*, *pp cresc.*, *arco*, *rall.*, *f*
- Violin II (Vn. II):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *pizz.*, *f*, *pp cresc.*, *I.o solo*, *arco*, *f*
- Viola (Vi.):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *pp cresc.*, *II.o. III.o.*, *arco*, *f*
- Violoncello (Vc.):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *pp*, *f*
- Contrabass (Cb.):** Bars 552-554. Markings: *mp*, *cresc.*, *f*

Additional markings and motifs include:

- Violin I & II:** *poco accel.*, *Lo leggjo (1st stand)*, *IV.a corda*, *arco*, *rall.*
- Viola:** *pp cresc.*, *II.o. III.o.*, *arco*
- Violoncello:** *pp cresc.*, *II.o. III.o.*, *arco*
- Contrabass:** *pp cresc.*, *II.o. III.o.*, *arco*
- Violoncello & Contrabass:** *div. a 3 ord.*, *IV.a corda*, *Entrapment leitmotif*, *cresc.*
- Violoncello:** *non div.*, *pizz.*, *Breathing leitmotif*
- Contrabass:** *div.*, *mp*, *cresc.*, *f*, *Entrapment leitmotif*

[She stumbles to the window, falling to her knees
as she reaches it. The sky is suddenly lit up
with fireworks. She stretches out her arms to
the light.]

Saartjie reaches her hands out to the shimmering stars above the stage (21:05–21:33, Example 43, bars 564^{1a}–565^{3g}). In the background is a blue light, resembling a star, which is perhaps the morning star as well.

The stars were an object of observation and contemplation to the Khoisan, evidence is found in the number of names that they bestow upon the stars (Hahn, 1881:23). For Saartjie, *the fiery stars of Africa* hold a special meaning as well – the Khoisan hold the view that the stars are the eyes and souls of the deceased and this points to a belief that there is an afterlife in Khoisan religion (Hahn, 1881:85). This belief ties in with the *Voices of the Ancients*, as seen in the next extract from the libretto (155–170). Saartjie thinks that it is the stars that are singing to her and calling her to the spiritual home of the Khoisan in the Great Beyond.

The orchestration in Example 43 is dense to resemble the multitude of stars that can be seen on a clear night in an open field. Of particular interest is the string section, playing the star leitmotif and the triangle, as well as the glass chimes adding to the glittering effect, which one associates with stars. The string section played this leitmotif in Saartjie's rendition of *Al lê die berge nog so blou* when she sings that she would console her with the morning star (see Example 6), without the use of the triangle and glass chimes. The use of glissandi also adds to the ethereal feeling invoked by the orchestration, while resembling the stars. In this section, the use of these instruments lends Saartjie's words a stronger dramatic effect and it also points to the special place the stars held in Saartjie's life, as a Khoisan woman who is far from her house and her loved ones.

It has to be noted that the star leitmotif is not played by the whole string section but rather divided into different groupings in the string section and played interchangeably, as in Example 43 (in bars 557–558) where it is played by the viola and cello. In bars 560–563, the second section of first violins and the second violins portray this leitmotif, and finally, in bars 564–565, the viola, violoncello, and contrabass are the ones that play this leitmotif.

Saartjie's address to the *fiery stars of Africa* – in combination with the star leitmotif – is portrayed by means of sparkles⁹⁶ resembling stars falling all over the stage. These fireworks – or 'stars', as Saartjie imagines them – is a symbolical prolepsis which points to Saartjie's death at the end of the opera; some Khoisan groups believe that a shooting (or falling) star indicates a death in the human community (Afolayan, 2004:58). The death leitmotif, in its altered form with different pitches and a changed rhythmic pattern, is furthermore also present *in combination* with the star leitmotif – a symbolic prolepsis of Saartjie's final demise in Example 45.

⁹⁶ The stage directions read: The sky is suddenly lit up with fireworks. She reaches her arms to the light.

Example 43: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section VI, bars 557–565. “The fiery stars of Africa” (percussion, vocal, and strings extract)

The musical score is divided into two systems, covering bars 557-565. The vocal line (Sarr.) has lyrics: "The stars, the flaming stars of African". The instrumental parts include:

- Clarinet (Clm.), Saxophone (Sax.), Violin I (Vn. I.), Violin II (Vn. II.), Viola (Vi.), Violoncello (Vc.), and Contrabass (Cb.):** These parts feature complex rhythmic patterns, often marked with *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *f* (forte). The strings are marked with *fp* (fortissimo piano) and *sempre sin.* (sempre sostenuto).
- Woodwinds (Clm., Sax.):** These parts include *gliss. tremoloso (non mirando)* and *Illo* markings.
- Vocal (Sarr.):** The vocal line is marked with *Lo leggjo (lat sand)* and *Illo*.

The score concludes with a *perdendosi* (fading away) instruction for the instrumental parts.

Ah! The stars – the fiery stars of Africa!
VOICES OF THE ANCIENTS:
Saartjie, !gās ʒkams (little sister), come home!
SAARTJIE:
I hear your call!
Come home to where your loved ones dwell!
I feel you reaching out to me!
Come home to where the loerie calls,
Soon I'll be there!
to where the aalwyn blooms with scarlet flame!
Soon I'll hear the loerie's call again,
Come home, !gās ʒkams, come home!
soon I'll see the aalwyn's scarlet flame!
Come home to where your loved ones wait for you!
I come!
Saartjie, come home, come home!
Oh Father, how I long to be with you!
Oh, come home, !gās ʒkams, come home!
I come, I come!
Oh, Saartjie, come home, come home!
Oh, stars of dearest Africa, I have come home!

The psychological nature of the opera comes to its full potential (*I hear your call! / I feel you reaching out to me!*) with the *Voices of the Ancients* not being present on the stage. To create the illusion that the *Voices of the Ancients* are calling to Saartjie in her imagination (Hofmeyr, 2014), the *Voices of the Ancients* are placed off-stage and thus they have become an *abstract* actant through the orchestra's and chorus' *Sprachvermögen*. The references in the libretto to hearing the loerie's call, seeing the aalwyn's scarlet flame, and being reunited with her father, as well as her loved ones in the Great Beyond, as encountered in Sections III and IV, will, at last, be fulfilled.

In this section, Hofmeyr has employed the call-and-response technique anew (Example 44); conversely, this technique is utilised to resemble the 'conversation' Saartjie is having with the *Voices of the Ancients*. They are inviting Saartjie home, to all these things she has longed for. Saartjie's vocals, in Example 38, can be analysed as follow: the words *I hear your call!* (21:44–21:47, Example 44, bars 568^{2b}–569) is composed to the rhythmic pattern found in the death leitmotif. The upward motion in Saartjie's vocals, as she sings *I feel you reaching out to me!*, symbolises Saartjie's desire to leave the immanent world for the transcendent world of the Great Beyond (21:55–22:00, bars 572^{1b}–573). Saartjie is, thus, 'answering' the call of death extended to her by the *Voices of the Ancients* to die and return home to her ancestors in the Great Beyond.

Example 44: Hofmeyr, 2009. Saartjie, Section VI, bars 566–5862. Saartjie and the Voices of the Ancients calling her home (vocal and strings extract)

566 **CC** 567 568 *mp* 569 570 571 572 573 574 *mf*

Saar. I hear your call! I feel you rea-ching out to me Soon

THE VOICES OF THE ANCIENTS (at first far off, but gradually approaching)

S. *pp* Saar-tjie !gas !kams, come home! Come home to where your loved ones dwell! Come home to where the

A. *pp* Saar-tjie !gas !kams, come home! Come home to where your loved ones dwell! Come home to where the

T. *pp* Saar-tjie !gas !kams, come home! Come home to where your loved ones dwell! Come home to where the

B. *pp* Saar-tjie !gas !kams, come home! Come home to where your loved ones dwell! Come home to where the

(! = cerebral click against the back palate)
(‡ = alveolar click against the front palate)

CC *Tutti uniti sul tasto*
Vn. I *ppp*
Vn. II *ppp*
Vi. *sul tasto*
Vc. *ppp*

575 576 577 578 579 580 581

Saar. I'll be there! Soon I'll hear the loe-rie's call a-gain, soon I'll see the aal - wyn's scar let

S. *mp* loe-rie calls, to where the aal - wyn blooms with scar-let flame! Come home, !gas !kams, come home! Come

A. *mp* loe-rie calls, to where the aal - wyn blooms with scar-let flame! Come home, !gas !kams, come home! Come

T. *mp* loe-rie calls, to where the aal - wyn blooms with scar-let flame! Come home, !gas !kams, come home! Come

B. *mp* loe-rie calls, to where the aal - wyn blooms with scar-let flame! Come home, !gas !kams, come home! Come

Vn. I *pp*

Vi. *mp*

Vc. *mp*

(Example continues on page 113)

(Example continued from page 112)

Saartjie's vocal expression is also now devoid of the jaggedness and extremities, ranging from a low soprano chest-voice to high, soaring notes, as found earlier in the opera. The jagged emotional leitmotif is present, as Saartjie sings *I have come home!* (23:06–23:15, Example 45, bars 594^{1b}–596), although altered to become a final expressive gesture – the approaching semitone is employed from above instead of below and is contained in the leap (Spies, 2010:83). The lyrical treatment of the emotional leitmotif ends the opera by resolving the tensions associated not only with the leitmotif but also with the emotional tension Saartjie has endured throughout the opera.

[She dies.]

CURTAIN

The star leitmotif (23:07–23:24,⁹⁷ Example 45, bars 595–596) is followed directly by an upward surge, which ends with a trill over three beats, as Saartjie fall over and dies (23:16–23:24, bars 597^{2b-4}). The death

⁹⁷ Many of the final examples overlap in time, hence the detailed fractionation.

leitmotif (23:18–23:24, Example 45, bars 597²–599^{1a}) is used as a final expressive gesture to symbolise that Saartjie’s trials and tribulations has, at last, ended. A single blue light, which fades after the stage is darkened (23:22–23:27), is visible and symbolises Saartjie’s final ascension to the Great Beyond.

The Khoisan beliefs surrounding death and life after death varies rather widely. For some, the deceased’s spirit ascends to the heavens, where it becomes a star. Many Kalahari groups believe that the deceased joins the house of the great god in the heavens; while some of the southern San speak of the bowels of the earth, which serves as an abode for those passed humans and animals who have died. Although Tsui//Goab is considered the arch-protector of living beings, Heitsi-Eibib – whose adventures and numerous deaths and resurrections are widely celebrated by many Khoisan groups – presides over the living’s fate (Afolayan, 2004:58). Considering that Saartjie mentions the ‘Great Beyond’ on numerous occasions, and her reverence for the stars, it is my understanding that Saartjie may refer to one of two meaning when she speaks about going ‘home’. Firstly, Saartjie may refer to the deceased’s spirit joining other spirits in the great god’s home (*come home to where your loved ones are waiting*). Secondly, Saartjie may be referring to the belief that the deceased becomes a star in the heavens given her reverence and references to the stars in the opera (*dan troos ek my aan die môrester, the flaming stars of Africa!*, and *oh, stars of dearest Africa, I have come home*).

The exact cause for Saartjie Baartman’s death is not known and numerous sources refer to various causes. Bradley *et al.* (1816:252) articulated “The Hottentot Venus, it appears from the French papers, died in Paris last week, after an illness of eight days. Her malady is said to have been the small-pox which the physicians successively mistook for catarrh, a pleurisy, and a dropsy of the chest”. Cuvier (1817:262) wrote in his autopsy report⁹⁸ about Saartjie that “she died of an inflammatory and eruptive disease”.⁹⁹ Smallpox and alcohol poisoning were given as the cause of death by Story (2007:138), while pneumonia is mentioned by Barss (2010:24). Whichever cause is correct; we will not know.

⁹⁸ Extrait d’Observations: Faites sur le Cadavre dune femme connue à Paris et à Londres sous le nom de Venus Hottentotte.

⁹⁹ Chez lequel elle est morte d’une maladie inflammatoire et éruptive.

Example 45: Hofmeyr, 2009. *Saartjie*, Section VI, bars 590–599. Saartjie’s death

The musical score for Example 45, titled "Saartjie's death" (bars 590-599), is a complex orchestral and vocal work. It features a full orchestra and a vocal ensemble. The vocal parts (Soprano, Mezzo Soprano, Contralto, Tenor, Baritone, Bass) all sing the same lyrics: "come home! Oh, Saartjie, come home, come home!" The Soprano part includes the lyrics: "Oh stars of dea-rest Af-ri-ca, I have come home! She dies. Curtain." The score is marked with various dynamics and articulations, including *cresc.*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *p*, *pp*, *sf*, and *sfz*. Performance instructions include *cantabile*, *cresc. poco a poco*, *staccato*, *Piano Sogno*, and *Gran cassa*. The score also includes markings for *Star leitmotif* and *Death leitmotif*. The score is in 4/4 time and ends with the instruction "Curtain."

Darling, 15/6/2009. Durata: c. 20'45".

4.6 Conclusion

The brief biography has placed the text into its historical milieu and furnished the reader with a background to Saartjie Baartman’s life before Paris, the trials and tribulations she endured throughout her life, leading up to her stay in Paris, and her ultimate passing. Throughout this chapter, it has become clear that this opera takes place on the final night of Saartjie Baartman’s life, which is only revealed towards the end, when Saartjie dies. The *syuzhet* (plot) of the opera is presented anachronistically to the addressee, with materials drawn from two centuries’ worth of events (*fabula*), which is from both during and after Saartjie’s death.

This chapter has dealt with the close reading of the text at the hand, applying Peirce's semiotic theory, and, as such, the context of the verbal and non-verbal sign systems in the text have been determined and interpreted. I have indicated the importance of the leitmotifs and how the leitmotifs aid in the construction of context in the opera. In addition to the leitmotifs, the actants and their contribution to the context and sign systems, which are present in the text through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*, have also been highlighted.

The four existing songs (*Al lê die berge nog so blou*, *La Marseillaise*, *Thula Thu*, and the Khoisan prayer *O! Gurbub!*) are employed by Hofmeyr, which can be seen a musical biography of Saartjie's life, referring to and outlining Saartjie's past, present, and future. *Al lê die berge nog so blou* is the first existing song and refers to Saartjie's past in South Africa; the second quoted song is *La Marseillaise*, which refers to Saartjie's current situation she finds herself in, in Paris, as a foreigner and the relentlessness of time, symbolised by the march. The third song, *Thula thu*, is an analeptic prolepsis of Saartjie returning home to perhaps Cesar's house as wet nurse, but also anticipates Saartjie's physical remains returning to South Africa, and her spiritual return to a transcendent home (Spies, 2010:82). The Khoisan prayer, being the final song, refers to Saartjie's past again and her childhood, cultural, and ethnic background.

By means of the analepses, and the mixed analepses, intertextual references – such as allusions to other texts, appropriation of four existing songs, and other texts – Hofmeyr has furnished the listener with extratextual information, which is not overtly communicated in the text of the opera. This extratextual information can, however, be traced through the various sources mentioned, especially in 4.3, and throughout the close reading conducted in this chapter. In life and in death, Saartjie ultimately “became a landscape on which scientists, showmen, and artists meditated on nature and hierarchy and elaborated a discourse of civilization and barbarism” (Scully, 2008:561).

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I present my findings, which have arisen from the close reading of the text, and drawn final conclusions how the various contexts are constructed in *Saartjie*, as a result of the verbal and non-verbal sign systems. A brief overview of the previous chapters is presented to clarify how the research methods have been employed in this study. I end this chapter with my final conclusion and recommendations for further studies.

5.2 Overview of the study

The first chapter of this study introduces the research questions to the reader, which, in turn, is answered through the research methods and culminates in this final chapter, offering a summary and final conclusions about *how* context is constructed in *Saartjie*.

Chapter 2 discussed the research methods and how these methods have been implemented in this study. I have also discussed the data gathering strategies, which included interviews, a literature review, and a close reading of the text. The data I have gathered throughout this study has been assimilated in an academic and scientific fashion.

Chapter 3 introduced the main literature, which pertains to this study, and discussed the concepts of text, sign systems – both the encoding and decoding of the sign systems – as well as the concept of context. From the close reading in Chapter 4, it has been seen that, in *Saartjie*, the libretto and music is composed in the first person, depicting a fictional Sara Baartman and giving her her own views and opinions. In this final chapter, I explicate *how* the research methods have been employed throughout this study. *Saartjie* is made up of a multitude of texts, by virtue of the anachronies present in the opera, which were all in need of decoding.

Each of these texts (visual, musical, and linguistic) have been explored and decoded, in Chapter 4, in a close reading of the text, by employing hermeneutics of suspicion. This, in turn, constituted the first part of the hermeneutic circle. Additionally, Peirce's semiotic theory aided me in understanding the particular meaning of the specific meaning and interpretation of the signs (both verbal and non-verbal). In this final chapter, I have brought the hermeneutical circle to a close by relating the parts of the text back to the whole.

5.2.1 Introduction and rationale

In Chapter 1, I introduced the rationale and background to this study, as well as the research questions. The main purpose of this study was to investigate how context is constructed in *Saartjie* through the verbal and

non-verbal sign systems. From the purpose statement, the research questions have been indicated. The main research question I posed reads as follows:

- How do the verbal and non-verbal sign systems contribute to the construction of context in *Saartjie*?

In order to answer the primary research question, the following secondary questions, which supports the primary research question, emanated:

- What are the verbal and non-verbal sign systems within the context of opera, in general?
- What are the verbal and non-verbal sign systems in *Saartjie* specifically?

In light of the primary and secondary research questions, I have followed a qualitative research design with an interpretivist and constructivist lens. Next, the research design and application of the research methods are discussed.

5.2.2 Research design and methods

Chapter 2 focused on the research design and the research paradigm within which this study fell was discussed. In this dissertation, the type of research I conducted was hermeneutic in nature and, as such, the main research method in this study, as pointed out in Chapter 1, is to make use of textual analysis. Close reading falls under textual analysis as a method of conducting research. I purposefully selected Hofmeyr's monodrama *Saartjie*, due to the rich opportunities it offered for a textual analysis. Textual analysis is a method by which researchers utilise a text. It is both a way of gathering data and analysing it, which, in turn, allows a researcher to comprehend and decode how members of variegated societies, and also subcultures, understand who they are, and how these societies and subcultures from a part of the spheres they, in turn, occupy (McKee, 2003:1). By the same token, a *close reading* is conducted in a conscious and orderly manner, to discern the underlying meaning of an object; this is, in turn, shared with others in an appraisal or evaluation (Brummett, 2009:26). The application of the research methods will be discussed in this section as well.

By means of the literature review, in Chapter 3, I discussed the concepts of text and it was expanded to include the concepts of a narrative text, intertextuality, and context. I also explained that an opera is a unique mutation of a narrative text, in which a story is told to an addressee through singing with an orchestral accompaniment. Furthermore, through the process of decoding, the hermeneutical circle was put into motion to discover how the parts contribute towards the construction of context in the whole.

Looking more closely at this, in Chapter 4, I employed the first part of Heidegger's hermeneutical circle (see Chapter 2: Figure 1), by way of hermeneutics of suspicion. My own preunderstanding of the text was challenged sometimes and, at other times, affirmed by the close reading and by cross-examining my own pre-understandings against the data I gathered. I gleaned new perspectives through this process of cross-

examination and, as such, I have arrived at and derived meaning from how the sign systems contribute to the construction of context in *Saartjie*. In this final chapter, I relate these ‘parts’ (verbal and non-verbal sign systems), which have arisen through the close reading, back to the ‘whole’ (*Saartjie*, as a text in its entirety), by pointing out the function of the sign systems and their contribution to constructing context in *Saartjie*.

In order to conduct a close reading, data needs to be first gathered and then interpreted in a systematic manner. In this qualitative study, I purposefully selected the following predetermined sources: (a) the score and libretto of *Saartjie*; (b) the accompanying DVD; (c) the plates, which depict Saartjie in various times, and plates related to Saartjie and her time abroad; (d) Cuvier’s autopsy report; (e) a semi-structured interview with the composer and personal correspondence with Zerbst, whom co-wrote the libretto with the composer; and (f) the literature review. All of these elements are discussed later on.

Hofmeyr’s score and libretto have been my primary source of information in conducting this study. As the subtitle *monodrama* suggests, it is an opera composed from Saartjie’s perspective. The interaction between the musical score and the libretto offer an entry point into the world Hofmeyr intended to create on the stage. In the initial stages of my research and data gathering, I identified the events and places *Saartjie* refers to throughout the opera and how these elements are strengthened and portrayed in the score. The score has given the libretto an expressive vehicle, which was further aided by the visual portrayal in the accompanying DVD.

The visual material, in the form of the accompanying DVD and the plates found in Chapter 4, provided a physical depiction of Saartjie. Moreover, the DVD was used first and foremost as an acoustic text, while examining the musical score and libretto. The DVD was also utilised to analyse the visual elements of the monodrama, which Rose (2013:72) referred to as “compositional interpretation”. This aided me in understanding Saartjie’s actions on the stage and, consequently, how her actions are supported by the music. A close connection is formed between the music, visual elements in the DVD, and Saartjie’s singing, as she communicates *her* story to the addressee (audience members).

The plates in Chapter 4 were purposefully selected to enhance the close reading of the text and also to provide further information regarding the spatiality and ideological zeitgeist, within which the opera is situated. The plates are, however, not arranged in chronological order; rather, they are presented to enhance the reader’s understanding of the spatiality and temporality that the opera is situated in, as well as the reigning school-of-thought during Saartjie’s time in England and Paris. The plates, thus, support the visual construction of context in the text.

Predetermined primary sources also include Cuvier’s autopsy report – this provided a deeper insight into the treatment Saartjie was subjected to during her time in Paris. Although Cuvier could not find any physical proof that Saartjie was any different from European women, he made a concerted effort to degrade her by comparing her to a monkey, based upon unfounded and outdated scientific thoughts (see 4.5.4 and 4.5.5).

Cuvier's report also pointed to a concerted effort, on the part of the French scientists, to show Saartjie's *otherness* and, in turn, the superiority of the European race.

The semi-structured interview with Hofmeyr and the correspondence with Zerbst provided valuable insights, against which the findings in Chapter 4 could be validated. In addition to this, the interview also provided additional insights about the opera and why the composer elected to make use of certain combinations of instruments and particular special orchestration techniques. The composer's intentions were also conveyed as to how he had envisaged the monodrama to be performed (see 1.2.1). My personal correspondence with Zerbst, in the form of a questionnaire, aided me in gaining a further and deeper understanding into the libretto of *Saartjie*. From the semi-structured interview and correspondence, I could further validate my findings and rectify incorrect presuppositions, which I could have brought to the study if not otherwise prepared.

5.2.3 Text, sign systems, and context

The literature review was presented in Chapter 3 and, in this particular chapter, I explained my understanding of what a text is. In this dissertation, the concept of text is understood in the broadest sense of the word, as put forward in the poststructuralist view of Derrida (1986:167) that a text is anything and everything around us and, as such, needs to be interpreted by decoding. Through my initial engagement with *Saartjie*, and after conducting the close reading and decoding the sign systems throughout the course of Chapter 4 (see 5.2.4), *Saartjie* has moved from a work and was transformed into a text. Likewise, the addressee also needs to actively engage with the text to interpret it and transform it into a text. *Saartjie* is made up of a multitude of micro-texts, which were all in need of decoding. It should be understood that the text is by no means fragmented but rather *Saartjie* should be viewed as a nexus, which resembles an interlaced structure of significances (Barthes, 1977:159) that needs to be decoded.

The discussion of what a text is, is further expanded to include the concept of narrative text. A story, such as opera, is a unique metamorphosis of a narrative text where it is a story narrated to an audience through music, acting, and singing. I also discussed the ideas of time and space, and that the characters and actants are placed within the specific temporalities and spatialities. Furthermore, I also pointed out in Chapter 3 that context needs a particular temporality and spatiality to be understood. I will discuss the bearing time and space has on context in 5.3.3 and 5.3.4 respectively. The norms and values of a specific time and place need to be taken into consideration to understand the particular context a text takes place in. The discussion in Chapter 3 also included the conception of intertextuality, due to the numerous intertextual references found in *Saartjie*. In addition to the discussion of *text*, I discussed the concepts of encoding and decoding through Peirce's semiotic theory, which provided me with a tool to decode the verbal and non-verbal sign systems in Chapter 4. Moreover, I discussed the ideas of actors and actants, which are present in the opera by means of the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*.

I have identified the following sign systems in the text. The *verbal sign systems* comprise of the sung libretto. The *non-verbal sign systems* are as follow: the leitmotifs and actants, which are present through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*; costumes; and Saartjie's room on the stage. The composer initially encoded each of these sign systems during the composition of the opera (see Chapter 3, Figure 2) resulting in an encoded text; the various sign systems were decoded by utilising Peirce's semiotic theory. By decoding the sign systems, I took advantage of the hermeneutical circle in Chapter 4 in the form of a close reading of the text.

5.2.4 Close reading of *Saartjie*

In Chapter 4, I provided a succinct synopsis of the opera, followed by a brief biographical sketch of Saartjie Baartman's life. The condensed biography was provided to steer the reader towards understanding Saartjie's viewpoints and comments about her situation in Paris and the treatment she was subjected to during her time abroad. From the biography, the derivation of the *syuzhet* and *fabula* could be understood while conducting the close reading of *Saartjie*.

In Chapter 4, the research methods were employed, in order to conduct the close reading of the text and the consequent micro-texts within the text. I presented my close reading of the text and, in order to validate my own findings in this study, I corroborated the findings against the personal interview conducted with the composer, as well as the questionnaire with the co-librettist. The interview and questionnaire aided me in gaining a deeper insight into the text, through the composer's and co-librettist's points of view, which also verified findings that emerged while conducting the close reading of the text.

Throughout the course of Chapter 4, the hermeneutical circle has been employed, establishing the parts that are related to the whole of the text, and relating the wholes and the parts with one another. In this chapter, these parts will be related back to the whole and the discussion focuses on *how* context is constructed in the opera, by means of the various elements, including the actants (5.3.1), temporality (5.3.3), spatiality (5.3.4). For now, let us look at how context has been constructed in *Saartjie*.

5.3 Constructing context in *Saartjie*

In Chapter 3 (see 3.5), I indicated that the meaning and understanding of a text is determined by context. Research by Culler (2006:67) drew attention to the fact that context comprises the precepts of language, the temporality and spatiality of *both* the author and reader, and other factors which may be deemed relevant and important in the understanding of the text. Viljoen (2012:1) pointed out that the concept of context embraces social, temporal, and spatial dimensions; likewise, social identity is infused with cultural and historical contexts – both in which conceptual contexts are immersed and intimately amalgamated. Thus, it is clear that a text must be placed in a certain temporality and spatiality to be understood. Moreover, the characters and actants, which make up the narrative text of *Saartjie*, are placed *in* the particular time and space.

The opera is composed from Saartjie's perspective. This is clear due to the use of the first person and Hofmeyr's subtitle *monodrama*. A certain amount of historical facts and events are referred to in the opera, by Saartjie, which may not have been known in an outside, third-person narrator. Actants, through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*, are employed as well to further furnish the addressee with more information. It has to be noted that the libretto and the opera is not a historical document and the libretto takes some liberties with the historical facts about Saartjie Baartman's life and death, such as the myth that she passed away on New Year's Eve (Hofmeyr, 2009). These historical facts are communicated, whether overtly or covertly, by way of the verbal and non-verbal sign systems in the opera.

5.3.1 Actants and orchestral *Sprachvermögen*

The *Sprachvermögen* of the leitmotifs as actants were identified and discussed in Chapter 4 (see 4.5.2). In this section, I discuss each of the actants that I have identified, in the close reading of the text, and their subsequent role in the opera. I identified the actants in the text through hermeneutics of suspicion, as the aim of this particular type of hermeneutics tasks itself with revealing, removing the 'mystery', and extracting the meaning of symbols, which simultaneously disclose but also obscure meaning in a text or object (Kaplan, 2005:462).

Actants can also be interpreted as a form of sign system, as they point to certain temporalities and specialities and function like signs or may even have a representational relation to the event or person in question (Everaert-Desmedt, 2011:194). The actants¹⁰⁰ provide extratextual information, through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*. The orchestra's ability to communicate ideas, which are not directly communicated by Saartjie herself, aid in the construction of context but also place non-verbal characters on the stage in the form of actants. The actants, thus, aid in constructing context in *Saartjie* by, firstly, their presence and reference to humans and other abstract concepts and, secondly, strengthening the intertextual references in the text.

In the close reading of the text, it became clear that the identified actants are associated with the anamneses Saartjie experiences throughout the opera. Furthermore, during these anamneses, a different time and space in which Saartjie found herself is referred to in the text.

The main actors of the monodrama (Saartjie and the Parisians) are introduced to the addressee during the *Introduction* (see 4.5.3) and are placed in a continental European setting (see 5.4.3). Through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*, as discussed in Chapter 3 (see 3.3.4), more actors in the *form* of actants are portrayed in the opera than are physically observable on the stage. The music also evokes a world that is not present on the stage (Hofmeyr, 2014): this is a world *outside* Saartjie's room, *inside her mind* as she reiterates prior

¹⁰⁰ I identified and discussed the following actants in Chapter 4, referring to humanlike persons through anthropomorphism: Rëaux, Saartjie, the Scientists, and the *Voices of the Ancients*. In addition to these actants, I also identified the following non-human actants: the nostalgia actant, yearning actant, and *!nau* actant.

happenings to the addressee. This *outside-but-inside-world* can be expanded to include actants in the form of anthropomorphism, tangible and intangible objects, and concepts, such human emotions, and abstract concepts in the form of yearning and the like (see footnote 100). I will discuss the anthropomorphised actants first in the succeeding paragraphs and then turn the attention to the *abstract* actants. I now turn the discussion to the leitmotifs in the following section.

5.3.2 Leitmotifs

The leitmotifs in *Saartjie* and the identification of a particular leitmotif aids in understanding a particular situation at any given moment in the opera. The leitmotifs aid in the construction of context in the opera, due to their association with Saartjie's current situation, with the exception of the star and death leitmotifs, as will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Further to this, the leitmotifs are also actants through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen* however the leitmotifs function on a completely different level to the actants, which will also be set out in the following paragraphs. The leitmotifs are part of the non-verbal sign systems in the text. I have identified the following leitmotifs in the text: (a) Saartjie's emotional leitmotif, (b) breathing leitmotif, (c) death leitmotif, (d) entrapment leitmotif, and (e) star leitmotif.

Saartjie's emotional leitmotif (see Chapter 4: Example 2), as pointed out in the previous chapter, is the most salient and prominent leitmotif in the opera. This particular leitmotif is employed both by the orchestra and in Saartjie's vocals. The actantial quality of this particular leitmotif strengthens the association between Saartjie's emotions and her current temporality at being a showgirl in Paris during the early nineteenth century.

During the *Introduction*, Saartjie's emotional leitmotif is introduced in the orchestra and, in the final scene, it is employed again, although the tension and dissonance associated with this leitmotif is resolved. Thus, the emotional leitmotif binds the opera from beginning to end into one cohesive whole. Furthermore, this leitmotif points to Saartjie's *current* temporality and spatiality, being in Paris on New Years Eve in 1815.

The temporality and spatiality in which the opera is placed is further strengthened during the *Introduction* of the opera, as seen in the previous chapter (see 4.5.3). Two actants are introduced, namely Réaux (through the snap pizzicato, which represents Réaux throughout the opera) and Saartjie (through the oboe's desolate melody, during the *Introduction*). Through deductive reasoning and hermeneutics of suspicion, I established that a relationship between Saartjie and Réaux exists in the music: Saartjie is represented by the emotional leitmotif (and in other instances by actants) and, through Saartjie's vocals in *Section I, Réaux cannot force me to continue*, the snap pizzicati falls on the words *force* and *continue*, when Saartjie refers to Réaux – he is brought to life (or personified) by means of Saartjie's vocals (see Chapter 4: Example 14). This particular instance is followed by Saartjie's emotional leitmotif and strengthens the link between the two. By identifying this connection between Saartjie and Réaux, the opera is placed in Paris during 1815.

With the breathing leitmotif (see Chapter 4: Example 3), the addressee's attention is drawn to Saartjie's physicality and, as such, makes her a believable character on the stage. This specific leitmotif has an actantial quality, owing to the fact that it *resembles* Saartjie's laboured breathing. With this in mind, this leitmotif draws attention to Saartjie's *physical* health and supports one of the hypotheses that Saartjie succumbed to a respiratory illness at the end of her life. As such, the breathing leitmotif also places Saartjie in the temporality and spatiality of Paris during the nineteenth century.

The entrapment leitmotif (see Chapter 4: Example 4) not only points to Saartjie's physical entrapment in her own sickly body and in her room in Paris but also symbolically to her entrapment in various situations during her lifetime. I indicated, throughout the course of Chapter 4, that Saartjie lived a life of slavery and entrapment, from childhood until her death. In England, her body became a slave to the public's fascination, with her unique physical features; later, in France, her body became a slave to Cuvier's discipline of comparative anatomy, which continued even after her death. The entrapment leitmotif also has bearing on the construction of ideological zeitgeist in the text, which will be discussed assiduously in 5.3.5.

During the *Introduction* of the opera, the death leitmotif was established and is proleptic in nature, foreshadowing, during the course of the opera, Saartjie's own death in the final scene of the opera. This particular leitmotif is encoded in the text by Hofmeyr and, as such, is defined by the composer's *a priori* knowledge when the opera was composed. The true meaning of this distinct leitmotif is revealed in the last scene of the opera, when Saartjie dies. The proleptic temporality the death leitmotif referred to throughout the course of the opera is finally brought in line with the current temporality of the opera, when Saartjie dies alone, in her room in Paris. As the opera progresses and the death leitmotif truly foreshadows Saartjie's death in the final section of the opera, the death leitmotif finally falls within the temporality and spatiality portrayed on the stage when Saartjie dies.

Personally, I consider the star leitmotif as the second most important leitmotif, after the emotional leitmotif, in constructing context in *Saartjie*. Of all the leitmotifs, the star leitmotif is both analeptic and proleptic in nature and refers to temporalities and specialities, both past and future; the star leitmotif is, thus, a mixed analepsis. In the wake of Hofmeyr's intention to portray Saartjie as a multi-cultural character (Hofmeyr, 2014), this leitmotif strengthens this intention – Saartjie adapted and attempted to assimilate herself in the European culture (she was baptised in England, see 4.3.2) but also held fast to the beliefs she was taught as a young child (the traditional prayer as seen in 4.5.9). The use of the star leitmotif in *Section III* in Chapter 4 (see 4.5.6) places Saartjie in the temporality and spatiality of South Africa, which aids the addressee in understanding Saartjie's past and the things she refers to therefrom. The proleptic nature of the star leitmotif points to Saartjie's death in the final scene of the opera and returning to a symbolic home among her own people in the Great Beyond. Moreover, the return home also refers to when her remains were finally interred in South Africa, in 2002.

From this discussion, it is clear that the leitmotifs in the text play an important role in not only constructing context but also in aids the addressee to understand the opera and the actions on the stage. There are three other factors, which are important in the construction of context in a text, namely temporality, spatiality, and ideological zeitgeist.

5.3.3 Temporality in *Saartjie*

The concept of time is closely related to the *fabula* and *syuzhet* in *Saartjie*. To reiterate, the *syuzhet* of the story is the way events are really presented to the addressee in the rendering of the story (Cuddon, 2013:286). Considering the *fabula*, various events from Saartjie's life are used as inspiration: the three analeptic arias are one such example. Further examples include, but are not limited to, Saartjie's visit to the *Jardin du Roi*, Cuvier's autopsy report, myths surrounding Saartjie's death, and also newspaper articles from that particular period. These raw and imagined materials of the *fabula* form a 'web', which is woven into an aesthetically pleasing whole through artistic techniques and becomes the story's *syuzhet* (Stam, 2009:72). The opera's *syuzhet* is presented anachronically: present events of the night are mixed with events that took place in the past (analepses), in order to furnish the addressee with further information. Additionally, there are also prolepses in the text, which refer to events, which still have to come to pass. One such example is the return of Saartjie's remains to South Africa after being displayed in a display case and, subsequent to its removal from public display, stored in a museum storeroom in Paris.

Three direct references to present time are offered in the opera: the first pointer to the time at which the opera takes place is in *Section I* (see 4.5.4), when Saartjie sings the first contemptuous waltz: *Another dreary evening / of being prodded, gawped at, pawed, / of prancing like a monkey / for the jades of gay Patee*. This hints that the opera is taking place at night, as Saartjie has returned from one of her performances in Rëaux's show (see Chapter 4: Example 13). A second indicator of time, also in *Section I*, is when Saartjie sings *But, of course, it's New Years Eve ...* This gives the addressee a particular day in the year on which the opera is taking place. Hofmeyr chose to keep with the myth, which claimed Saartjie passed away on New Year's Eve 1815 (Hofmeyr, 2009; Hofmeyr, 2014). The addressee still does not have a specific time of night in which the opera takes place, which is clarified by the third and final reference to time: the stage direction in the libretto reads as follow: *a distant clock can be heard striking midnight. At the stroke of twelve, a crowd can be heard cheering, whistling and laughing in the distance* (see Chapter 4: Example 37). The striking clock has a two-fold purpose: firstly, to signal the New Year which has arrived and, secondly, as a proleptic death knell for Saartjie, who will pass away at the end of the opera. These three progressive references to time aid in the construction of context, with regards to the day and time in which the opera takes place however, due to the anachronic manner the text is presented, further information is communicated to the addressee.

Three traditional South African songs are quoted and they are analeptic in nature referring to Saartjie's life and past in South Africa. During the interview, Hofmeyr stated on only one occasion that he took an

“operatic liberty” (Hofmeyr, 2014) to include *Al lê die berge nog so blou*. I extend Hofmeyr’s operatic liberty to *La Marseillaise* and the three folksongs that are quoted during the course of the opera as well. The inclusion of the folksongs furnishes the addressee with information regarding Saartjie’s temporality and spatiality that is not overtly communicated in the opera. Moreover, the quoted songs are each in a different language, adding to the complexity and multi-cultured character of Saartjie Baartman, as the songs are sung in Afrikaans, isiXhosa, and Khoisan, and “evoke[s] that kind of multi-cultural complexity, rather than to be monolithic and in straightforward operatic or classical style” (Hofmeyr, 2009; Hofmeyr, 2014).

Four existing songs (*Al lê die berge nog so blou*, *La Marseillaise*, *Thula Thu*, and the Khoisan prayer *O! Gurbub!* in order of presentation in the opera) are employed by Hofmeyr. I regard these songs as a musical biography of Saartjie’s life, referring to and outlining Saartjie’s past, present, and future. Further to this, the four songs are all intertextual in nature. *Al lê die berge nog so blou* is the first existing song that appears in this opera and it refers to Saartjie’s past in South Africa; the second quoted song is *La Marseillaise*, which refers to Saartjie’s current situation of being in Paris as a foreigner; the third song, *Thula thu*, is a prolepsis of Saartjie’s physical remains returning to South Africa but also her spiritual return to a transcendent home (Spies, 2010:82); and the Khoisan prayer, being the final song, refers to Saartjie’s past again and her roots as a child, her cultural, and ethnic background.

Adding to this discussion, Spies (2010:82) introduced the claim that the three existing songs – *Al lê die berge nog so blou*, *La Marseillaise*, and the Nguni lullaby *Thula thu* – refer, respectively, to Saartjie’s past, present, and future. I agree with Spies regarding the use of *Al lê die berge nog so blou*; this particular analeptic aria is dualistic in nature and the two quoted verses refer to two distinct periods in Saartjie’s life. The first verse refers to Saartjie’s childhood (ca. 1777–1795/6) and Hofmeyr (2014) stated that *Al lê die berge nog so blou* refers “to a fairly vague memory of her childhood which she associates with the natural beauty of the Eastern Cape, therefore with the idea of the Gamtoos Valley and so forth”. The second verse refers to the period around 1803–1806, during which Saartjie was in the employ of Hendrik Césars and was in a relationship with Hendrik de Jongh (see 4.3.1 and 4.5.6, respectively).

On the utilisation of *La Marseillaise*, I beg to differ. While Spies (2010:82) referred to *La Marseillaise* as “signifying the relentlessness of time marching on”, I pointed out in Chapter 4 (see 4.5.7) that certain words can be interpreted by Saartjie as a direct attack against her. By the same token, *La Marseillaise* refers to Saartjie’s *current* temporality and spatiality, being Paris, France. This is supported by the simple song, which the Revellers sing about her, as well as the French period costumes (see 5.3.4). I asserted in Chapter 4 (see 4.5.2.4) that the *death leitmotif* points to the relentlessness of time marching on for Saartjie, rather than *La Marseillaise*. This view is supported from the information that I gleaned from Hofmeyr during the interview: “the kind of repeated note motifs that evokes, if you like, almost a funeral march when she speaks of death and which comes again when there is a reference to death or when her own approaches” (Hofmeyr, 2014).

The employment of *Thula thu*, according to Spies (2010:82), symbolises “an imminent return to her indigenous African roots, but also a spiritual home of eternal peace”. I agree with this affirmation on the use of *Thula Thu*, however only in part. In my close reading of the text (see Chapter 4), I affirmed that the *home* to which Saartjie refers to could be that of Cesars, where she was employed as a wet nurse/surrogate for the Cesars’ child. *Thula thu*, as the final aria, follows shortly after Saartjie’s second anamnesis as she reminisces about her life in South Africa, which supports my observation in this regard. However, I have to point out that I do agree with Spies (2010:82) about Saartjie’s physical remains returning to South Africa and also her spiritual return to a transcendent home (Spies, 2010:82). However, this particular aria is also an analepsis because Saartjie once more reminisces about her past. Both my and Spies’ observations form the mixed analepsis of Saartjie returning to her duties as Cesar’s wet nurse and her return home, her physical remains and transcendental return home.

5.3.4 Spatiality in *Saartjie*

In the narrative text of *Saartjie*, language and clothing aid the addressee in determining the specific place in which Saartjie is during the opera. Furthermore, there are both verbal and non-verbal sign systems that are associated with spatiality in *Saartjie* that assist in the understanding of how context is construed through the spatial element.

La Marseillaise and Hofmeyr’s invented song places Saartjie in Paris at the time of her death. *La Marseillaise* was banned at the time Saartjie found herself in Paris however this was one of the dramatic possibilities the libretto offered (Hofmeyr, 2009) and an “operatic liberty” (Hofmeyr, 2014) was taken with the historical facts in the opera. *La Marseillaise* is heard twice in the opera: the first time is when the Parisians interrupts Saartjie’s brief moment of sleep (see 4.5.7) and the second is in combination with Hofmeyr’s invented song (see 4.5.9). The Parisians are clothed in French period costume (see Chapter 4: Still 2). All of these verbal and non-verbal signs draw the addressee’s attention to the fact that Saartjie is in Paris during that particular time.

Although Hofmeyr’s invented French song (*Africa! Avez-vous vu la Vénus Hottentote?*) about Saartjie (see 4.5.5) is not an intertextual reference in itself, it has some bearing on the English songs, which were published as broadsheets (see Chapter 4: Plate 5 for an example of one such song in English). Neither I nor the composer could locate any of these simple songs about Saartjie in French in particular. Hofmeyr (2014) invented a song to suggest “more or less the spirit of what such songs might have dealt with was sufficient and many of the English songs do refer to her physical attributes and that is also why I tried to incorporate that in a slightly salaciousness and undignified way”. The male Parisians sing this particular song initially and, the second time, it is sung in combination with *La Marseillaise*, where the female Parisians sing the invented song and the male Parisians sing *La Marseillaise* (see 4.5.9). This song strongly points to the public’s fascination with Saartjie’s unique physical attributes.

On two occasions, Saartjie experiences an anamnesis as she harks back to a time of her life as a young person in the Eastern Cape (see 4.5.5 and 4.5.7 respectively). These analepses hark back to a space and time, which is not present on the stage.

Through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*, a world that is removed from the one Saartjie is in presently is created in her thoughts, through abstract concepts such as emotions and longing, as discussed above. In *Section VI*, the *Voices of the Ancients* are heard *off-stage*, calling out to Saartjie to return home. Further to this, the *Voices of the Ancients* resemble a world and space *outside* of Saartjie's room and *inside* her imagination thus a separate spatiality is created once more within the text. The non-verbal sign systems that aid in the construction of context include the visual and spatial elements.

After the *Introduction* (see 4.5.3), where Saartjie and the Parisians are introduced in their respective costumes, Saartjie enters her cage-like room on the stage, where she remains throughout the opera. The physical depiction of Saartjie's room on the stage places her in a physical 'jail' on the stage, much like a museum object – "the idea of her being confined, which I think was a part of my conception as well, in this room and that the world is outside it. That's also what the music does – it evokes worlds that are not on stage" (Hofmeyr, 2014). These *outside worlds*, which is created through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*, include the three arias (see 5.4.2.1), as well as the anamneses and mental impressions, as Saartjie harks back to when she mentions the scientists (see 5.4.4 and Chapter 4) and her childhood growing up (see Chapter 4).

As mentioned in Chapter 3 (see 3.3.3), costumes are used to portray a certain period in time. The same may also be said with regards to costumes constructing the concept of space; by being dressed in a certain fashion, the Parisians' dress creates the idea that Saartjie is in nineteenth-century continental Europe. Initially, it is not very clear with regard as to the specific *where* in Europe that she is. Although language is not a visual sign system but rather an auditory sign system, language in combination with the costumes aids in the construction of spatial context in *Saartjie*. With the Parisian Revellers singing ditties about Saartjie in French, one can specifically deduce that she is in France however Saartjie affirms this with the opening of the first contemptuous waltz, as the libretto reads: *prancing like a monkey / for the jades of gay Patee* (see libretto: Appendix A). A further reference to France as 'space' is seen when the Parisians, while singing *La Marseillaise* for the first time, are bathed in lighting from above, in blue, white, and red that forms the colours of the French flag.

5.3.5 Ideological zeitgeist in *Saartjie*

Throughout this dissertation, I have focused specifically on the temporal and spatial elements and how they contribute to the creation of context in *Saartjie*. However, a third element, mentioned by Viljoen (2012:1), is the social dimension of context. I briefly referred to the ideological zeitgeist in Chapter 4. Ideological

zeitgeist is constructed in *Saartjie* through a binary opposition: Saartjie's *otherness* versus the Parisians' *Europeanism*.

Throughout Chapter 4, the *otherness* of Saartjie Baartman was identified. The Parisians' contrastive costumes epitomise the *cultural* differences between Saartjie and them, and, more broadly, the Europeans. The generally accepted ideas propagated by the French scientists and public alike, during the nineteenth century, about Saartjie were accepted as the 'truth' at that time however, with the advances in the field of science and the expansion of academic research, one has to understand *Saartjie*'s text within the zeitgeist and ideological framework in which the opera is placed. As time progresses, different generations ascribe different meanings to events and ideas they deem important. One can easily interpret *Saartjie* from a modern twenty first century perspective and condemn the treatment Saartjie Baartman was subjected to. Alternatively, a more historic approach and understanding of the ideas and ideals of nineteenth century Europeans may cast light on the events Saartjie experienced. As stated earlier in 5.3, the opera is composed from Saartjie's perspective hence my election to follow a constructivist and interpretivist approach in this dissertation.

Said (1978) posed thought-provoking questions regarding *Otherness* in his monograph *Orientalism*. One of these questions read as follows: "Is the notion of a distinct culture (or race, or religion, or civilization) a useful one, or does it always get involved either in self-congratulation (when one discusses one's own) or hostility and aggression (when one discussed the 'other')?" (Said, 1978:325). To answer this question, in light of *Saartjie*, one can easily see the notion of self-congratulation but also a hint hostility in nineteenth century Paris. Otherness in *Saartjie* is alluded to throughout the text.

Cuvier filled the metaphoric lacuna in the vision to which Jay (1993:8) refers. Saartjie was viewed as a tremendously evolved animal, and then she is meticulously examined to determine the relationship between her, humans, and other animals. Further to this, Saartjie would then be used as a benchmark to judge the Western civilisation's evolution and also the difference and progress Western civilization has made (Sharpley-Whiting, 2007:309). From this, we can clearly see a notion of self-congratulation (on the part of Cuvier) and hostility (towards Saartjie on the part of the Parisians), considering Said's definition of Otherness in his monograph *Orientalism*.

Saartjie's otherness in the text is used to not only further strengthen the spatiality and temporality in the text – namely a foreigner in a continental European setting – but also the ideological zeitgeist. Not only does the intertextual references in the text to Cuvier's autopsy report reduce the temporality to Paris during 1815,¹⁰¹ it also signifies Saartjie's social status in the European's view. Hofmeyr (2014) stated, during the interview, that he did not explicitly aim to refer to Cuvier's writings, although he knew about all the

¹⁰¹ "In the spring of 1815, having been taken to the Jardin du Roi [today Jardin des Plantes], she had the complaisance to slough off her clothes and to be painted from the nude" (Cuvier, 1817:4).

legendary quotations about Saartjie Baartman, and his aim was to keep the quotations from Cuvier's writing at Saartjie's level of understanding (Hofmeyr, 2014). The inclusion of this reference to Saartjie's visit to Cuvier's laboratories in the libretto refers to the reigning scientific spirit of the French scientists in the eighteenth and, especially, the nineteenth century but also the treatment and indignation Saartjie was subjected to during her time in Paris (see 5.3.4). Saartjie is placed in a particular time (spring) and space (Jardin du Roi in Paris) and, by means of this specific actant, two of the elements, which contribute to context, are presented.

The ideological zeitgeist in the text of *Saartjie* clearly points to a vivid contrast drawn between Saartjie and the Parisians. This is achieved by the contrasting costumes – Saartjie is dressed as she is imagined to be in her own country, while the Parisians are dressed in continental clothing. Language is also employed as a tool to contrast Saartjie with the Parisians: Saartjie sings in three traditional South African languages (Afrikaans, isiXhosa, and Khoisan), as she would have done during her performances in England and France. Because Saartjie sang in languages which could not be understood by the Parisians, she is automatically regarded as merely a showgirl and a *voluptuous monster / beast from darkest Africa* (see Chapter 4: Section II). From the above, it can be seen that Saartjie was regarded as being from a lower social standing than the continental Parisians.

5.5 Conclusion

The text is presented anachronistically. During the final night of her life, Saartjie shares her life story with the audience through brief analepses and anamneses. By referring to different temporalities and spatialities, Saartjie found herself in throughout her existence she relives these experiences and as a result of this, the addressee is provided with information that is not overtly communicated in the opera. These extratextual references aid in the construction of context, by framing Saartjie's existence prior to her departure abroad. In addition to this, one subtle reference is made to Saartjie's life in England but the main focus of the text is on the final night of Sara Baartman being alive.

The orchestra's *Sprachvermögen* enabled me to identify the actants and leitmotifs in the text. The identification of the actants and leitmotifs also aided me in identifying certain temporalities and spatialities in the text, which I consider to be extratextual information. This extratextual information, furthermore, contributed and assisted in the construction of context in the opera, by referring to various temporalities and spatialities Saartjie occupied during the course of her life.

Through the sung libretto, Saartjie communicated her story to the audience. A close relationship exists between the verbal and non-verbal sign systems in *Saartjie*. The sung libretto (verbal sign system) is supported by the non-verbal sign systems in the opera. The non-verbal sign systems consist of the actants and leitmotifs, which are presented through the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen*. Likewise, Saartjie's gestures and body language, the French period costumes, Saartjie's own outfit (which points out her otherness), are

all non-verbal sign systems. In *Saartjie*, various verbal and non-verbal sign systems have been amalgamated to form a cogent whole.

From the start of this dissertation, I set out to investigate how context is constructed by these sign systems. The three main elements, which contribute to the construction of context, are the temporal, spatial, and social elements. In *Saartjie*, these three elements are indivisibly fused together. Each temporal reference also refers to certain spatialities in the text, which, in turn, aids the addressee's understanding of a particular situation *Saartjie* refers to. In addition to this, Peirce's theory of semiotics considers the particular effect a sign may have on a person, a point that is especially helpful in this dissertation and aids in the understanding of context in *Saartjie*. Through Peirce's semiotic theory, the orchestra's *Sprachvermögen* in the actants and leitmotifs were analysed and understood, as to how these elements also contribute to the construction of context.

By expanding the understanding of what a text is – that everything around us can be interpreted as a text, keeping the spirit of post-structuralism in mind – I have demonstrated that poststructuralist principles, as well as narrative concepts and approaches, can be successfully applied in the analysis of an operatic text and that they have been, in the case of this dissertation.

5.6 Suggestions for further studies

The intertextualities and appropriations in the text offer opportunity for further study. *Saartjie*'s outfit in the opera would provide visual arts researchers the opportunity to compare various paintings and cartoons, which were produced during her lifetime with her outfit in the opera. The subtle allusions in the libretto to Cuvier's autopsy report provides ample points of entry for a more detailed investigation into the initial and reprinted version of Cuvier's report, and a comparison with Hofmeyr's libretto. From a musicological point of view, the three analeptic, intertextual arias, as well as the use of *La Marseillaise*, and the invented ditty provide rich opportunities for exploration – both musicological and from the perspective of literary theory. The orchestra's *Sprachvermögen* provides an interesting perspective for analysing the characters and the actants and their function in the opera. Additionally, the leitmotifs in the text provide copious material for further investigation, as to how leitmotifs function and are deployed to suit a particular situation, both in *Saartjie* and in operas in general. The treatment of the leitmotifs, how the leitmotifs are transformed, adapted, and used in combination with one another offers rich opportunity for further investigation and study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIBRETTO OF SAARTJIE

SAARTJIE

Scenario by Fiona Zerbst and Hendrik Hofmeyr

Libretto by Hendrik Hofmeyr

Paris, New Year's Eve, 1815. Saartjie Baartman's room, with a door in one of the side walls, and a window in the back wall through which rooftops and the sky are visible. There is a bed and next to it a low table that holds an oil lamp, Saartjie's long pipe, a bottle of brandy and a vase with a few chrysanthemums. On the other side of the table stands a chair facing the audience. A full-length mirror stands downstage with its back at an angle to the audience. A *mamokhorong* (single-string violin) hangs over the downstage corner of the mirror.

Saartjie enters, wearing pointed green slippers with black silk bows, and a long cloak which covers her down to her ankles. Under it she has on a flesh-coloured body stocking lined with cotton, and decorated with ivory-coloured, ostrich-eggshell beads looped around her neck and waist, an elaborate apron and various pendants, as in the 1811 aquatint by FC Lewis. Her face is made up with greasepaint and soot. She carries a *ramkie* (a kind of guitar about 1 metre long, made from a half-gourd covered with stretched sheepskin and attached to one end of a straight plank about 10–13 cm wide, with gut or wire strings raised by a bridge on the body and by a nut near the end of the neck, and with tuning-pegs inserted from behind, as on the ukulele), which she throws on the bed.

[Orchestral Introduction: bars 1–65¹]

Section I (bars 65²–175²)

SAARTJIE [Clutching her upper chest]:
Ah, these stairs will be the death of me!
I cannot breathe!
Midwinter – and I feel I like I'm on fire!

[She throws open the window, then drops onto the bed, reaches for the bottle of brandy and takes a long draught.]

Ah, that's better!
Another dreary evening
of being prodded, gawked at, pawed,
of prancing like a monkey
for the jades of gay Paree,
It must be the last time!

[she takes another draught.]

Reaux cannot force me to continue;
I am ready to collapse.
but perhaps that's what he's after:
Those frigid men of science
among their skeletons and heads in jars,
those men, who made me strip
so they could probe me top to toe,
those men will pay most handsomely
for my body when I'm dead.
"As rare and fine a specimen, dear sirs,
as one could hope to find;
the famous Saartjie Baartman
known as la Vénus Hottentote.
Vive the great collection of the famed Jardin du
Roi!"

[She lifts the bottle on high, as in toast, and drains it.]

Section II (bars 175³–263)

REVELLERS [far-off and indistinct, but gradually approaching]:
Africa! Avez-vous vu la Vénus Hottentote?
SAARTRJIE:
Oh, these damned Parisians!
Don't they know what time it is?
C'est vraiment une tendre gélinotte!
But of course. It's New Years Eve...
Elles est venue Africa pour faire la carrière,
But wait, what is that they are singing?
Mais ici ne fait que montrer le derrière!

REVELLERS [passing under the window]:

Ah, la belle Vénus Hottentote,
[Saartjie starting up] Not another song about me?!

Elle chante, elle danse la gavotte.
[she clamps her hands over her ears]
Enough, enough, enough,
Tous veulent l'épouser, ma a cette prière,
enough, be quiet!
*La farouche ne fait que motrer le derrière!*¹⁰²
You dirty-minded dogs,
to you I am no more than this!

[She leaps up, and staring at her image in the mirror, tears off her cloak to reveal her costume.]

Voilà la belle Venus Hottenote,
C'est vraiment une tendre gelinotte!
The Venus Hottentot!
Voluptuous monster,
beast from darkest Africa,
creature of your wildest fantasies!

[She fights for breath and sinks into the chair. The sound of the revellers disappears into the distance.]

Is this all that remains of me?

Section III (bars 264–332¹)

Where is the Saartjie that dreamed by the Gamtoos and mingled her song with the call of the birds?
Where are those other New Year's Eves those nights of song and dance and laughter with my Daniel at the Tavern of the Seas?
Daniel, my darling drummer-boy,
do you remember me still?
Do you remember Saartjie,
and how she sang for you?
[She takes up the ramkie.]
Al lê die berge nog so blou,
Al lê die berge nog so blou,
Al lê die berge nog so blou,

¹⁰² Africa! Have you seen the Hottentot Venus? She is truly a tender young pullet. She's come from Africa to further her career, But now that she's here all she does is turn tail! Ah, the beautiful Hottentot Venus, She sings, she dances the gavotte! Everyone wants to marry her, but when asked, All the shy thing does is to turn tail!

Sy woorde sal ek steeds onthou.
Al woon my bokkie nog so ver,
Al woon my bokkie nog so ver,
Al woon my bokkie nog so ver,
*Dan troos ek my aan die môrester.*¹⁰³

[She falls into a reverie, the ramkie dropping into her lap.]

Daniel, do you remember?
Do you remember me, my dear?
And our darling girl – do you remember her?

Section IV (bars 332²–441)

[A marching band is heard approaching from the distance, accompanied by people singing *LaMarseillaise*. At the sound of the drumming, she starts up and rushes to the window.]

SAARTJIE:

Daniel, you've come back to me!

CHORUS:

Allons enfants de la Patrie,
Daniel! Daniel! Daniel!
Le jour de gloire est arrivé.
Where is he?
Contre nous, de la tyrannie,
Where is my drummer-boy?
L'étendard sanglant est levé.
So many people...
Entendezvous dans les campagnes
Here comes the band now... No it isn't he!
[She turns away from the window in disgust.]
Mugir ces farouches soldats.
Just more Frenchmen singing hollow hymns
Ils viennent jusque dans nos bras
to freedom and fraternity...
égorger vos fils, vos compagnes.
To arms! indeed!
Aux armes citoyens!
And who is the oppressed?
Formez vos bataillons,
A, Daniel! Ah, Daniel!
Marchons, marchons!

¹⁰³ As long as the mountains lie so blue, As long as the mountains lie so blue, As long as the mountain lie so blue, I shall remember his words. Although my darling's far, Although my darling's far, Although my darling's far, I'll console myself with the morning star.

Ah, save me!
Qu'un sang impur
 Save me! Save me from these people!
Abeuve nos sillons.
 Free me from their prying eyes,
Amour sacré de la Patrie,
 free me from their smiles, their snickering,
 their songs!
Conduis, soutiens nos bras vengeurs,
 Liberté, liberté chérie,
Liberté, liberté chérie,
 [disappearing into the distance]
*Combats avec tes défenseurs!...*¹⁰⁴
 Ah, tes défenseurs, *indeed!*

*I want no more of all their freedoms,
 I want no more of their acclaim.
 Oh, Hendrik did you foresee all this,
 when you brought me here?
 Your promises of fame and fortune
 entranced my all too eager ears.
 I left all that was dear to me
 to play the savage on a London stage.
 Now you've gone back...
 Oh, what a fool I've been!
 What made me stay in Paris,
 when I could have gone home with you?
 How gladly would I give all this
 for one day among my own?*

[Clutches her neck again]

It is too late!

Section V (bars 442–507²)

*The waters of the Gamtoos
 will nevermore cool this brow,
 I'll nevermore hear the loerie's call,
 nor see the aalwyn's flame.
 Now only death can reunite me*

*with my loved ones in the Great Beyond.
 Father, will you be there to greet me
 with your hunter's bow in hand?
 Will you burn the fragrant buchu leaves
 to give thanks for my return?
 And my darling girl, my Elsie,
 will you be a baby still?
 Will I cradle you within these arms
 as you nestle with your head against my
 breast?*

[Folds her arms as if cradling an infant, and
 sinks into the chair.]

*Thula, thu, thula, thula, thula sana,
 thul'umam 'uzobya ekuseni,
 Thula, thula, babana...*¹⁰⁵

Section VI (bars 507³–599)

[As Saartjie falls asleep, a distant clock can
 be heard striking midnight. At the stroke of
 twelve, a crowd can be heard cheering,
 whistling and laughing in the distance.
 Saartjie, still half asleep, lifts her head.]

What?! Where am I?!

MALE CHORUS:

Allons enfants de la Patrie,

FEMALE CHORUS:

Avez-vous vu la Vénus Hottentote?

Le jour de gloire est arrivé.

C'est vraiment une tendre gélinotte!

Contre nous, de la tyrannie,

*Elle est venue d'Afrique pour faire la
 carrière,*

L'étendard sanglant est levé.

Mais ici ne fait que montrer le derrière!

¹⁰⁴ Come, children of the Fatherland,
 The day of glory has arrived.
 Against you tyranny has raised
 Its blood-soaked banner.
 Do you hear its savage hordes
 Roaring though the land?
 They come right into our midst
 To slaughter your children and your friends.
 To arms, citizens!
 Form your battalions,
 Let us march!

Let their impure blood
 Drench our fields!
 Sacred love of the Fatherland,
 Lead and sustain our vengeful arms.
 Liberty, cherished liberty,
 Fight alongside your defenders!...)

¹⁰⁵ Hush, hush, little baby,
 Mommy will be home in the morning.
 Hush, hush, little baby.

SAARTJIE [starting up at the sound of cannon-fire]:

Ah, the !nau is upon me!

[Falls to her knees.]

!Nanumatse! !Gari-khoi, !Gurutse!,
‡Ouse gobare, /havië t'am u-hã-tamaö;
/Ubatare ‡outago Xuige.
!Gurutse! /Nanus oatse!¹⁰⁶
[She clutches at her neck]

Ah, I cannot breathe!

[She stumbles to the window, falling to her knees as she reaches it. The sky is suddenly lit up with fireworks. She stretches out her arms to the light.]

Ah! The stars – the fiery stars of Africa!

VOICES OF THE ANCIENTS:

Saartjie, !gã's ‡kams (little sister), come home!

SAARTJIE: I hear your call!
Come home to where your loved ones dwell!

I feel you reaching out to me!
*Come home to where the loerie calls,
Soon I'll be there!
to where the aalwyn blooms with scarlet flame!*

Soon I'll hear the loerie's call again,
*Come home, !gã's ‡kams, come home!
soon I'll see the aalwyn's scarlet flame!
Come home to where your loved ones wait
for you!*

I come!
*Saartjie, come home, come home!
Oh Father, how I long to be with you!
Oh, come home, !gã's ‡kams, come home!
I come, I come!
Oh, Saartjie, come home, come home!
Oh, stars of dearest Africa, I have come home!*

[She dies.]

CURTAIN

¹⁰⁶ Son of the Thundercloud! Brave, roaring Gurub!
Speak softly, for I am without guilt;
Forgive me, for I am grown weak,
O Gurub! Son of the Thundercloud!

**APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY
ANDREW OLSEN (A.O.) WITH HENDRIK HOFMEYR (H.H.) ON 25
APRIL 2014, DARLING, SOUTH AFRICA**

A.O. Hendrik, first of all, how would you define your opera in terms of genre: is it a chamber opera, a short opera – could it even be considered a ‘micro-opera’?

H.H. Well, I suppose the subtitle I gave it myself is ‘monodrama’ based sort of on the idea of a one-person-opera of very short duration. I suppose the most famous monodrama is *Erwartung* by Schoenberg which is also scored for a fairly small orchestra and also lasts about 20 minutes – well I am not so sure about the duration, but any way you could check that up [chuckles]. Ya, so the idea was to write, we had to stick to the time limit of twenty minutes and the orchestration was in a way prescribed – we could use fewer instruments than the ones allowed, but not more. So yes, I would say monodrama is perhaps the easiest way to define it, because I think most people associate the monodrama with the Schoenbergian model; which means a short opera with small instrumental ensemble and one singer.

A.O. It makes sense. Number 2, how did the time constraint of the *Opera 5:20* influence your composition as well as libretto?

H.H. Not particularly, we were given quite a lot of time to submit the libretto first and then submit also the music. I didn’t really feel myself pressurised in any way. The libretto went remarkably quickly actually – the music always takes longer.

A.O. Yes, of course – but more the time limit of say, twenty minutes.

H.H. Well, of course it influences one. I suppose the idea came to me of really writing, if you like, almost the ‘final scene’ of what might have been a longer opera and perhaps one day I will write that longer opera. It is, if you like, the ‘death scene’ you traditionally find at the end of conventional operatic setup – and that death scene is very rarely longer than twenty minutes. So the idea was to try and fit into those twenty minutes as much of what makes the protagonist what she is, in my mind, without kind of over-crowding the details. She refers to a number of things without being too explicit about them and perhaps a certain amount of pre-knowledge of her story is necessary to appreciate what is going on. But at the same time I wanted the work to be accessible to people who know nothing about Saartjie [Baartman] therefore I try to give enough information to make them understand what she is going through, why she thinks, and speaks, and feels the way she does about the issues.

A.O. Number 3. What about the story of Saartjie Baartman attracted you to compose an opera about such a simple, though historically important lady?

H.H. Well, I suppose the fact for me is that I don't really see her as that 'simple' – I see her as quite a complex figure and of course she has been elevated to the role of a kind of tragic heroine in South Africa – I think partly for political reasons rather than anything that is necessarily true about her history. I read fairly widely about her story and it is remarkable how research has changed over the years and how the view of her as someone simply a victim and exploited had in fact to be reviewed in relation to the latest evidence that came to the front. And of course, she is a highly contentious figure also which I thought could be very interesting in the South African context. I for example don't see her as the kind of ultimate victim and if you like, 'the ever-suffering African woman' who can only be exploited and who has no voice of her own. For me she was in a certain sense a truly remarkable person and I think a highly successful one – she was without any doubt in 1815 the most famous South African who had ever lived in terms of world-wide fame and I think that counts for something. Now I don't think her story – tragic as it is, is necessarily more tragic than every other showgirl of the nineteenth century. They were poorly paid exploited people who tended to die young. In fact some research has shown that the age at which Saartjie died, which was in her mid-thirties, was a fairly advanced age for a Parisian showgirl. So, she wasn't that particular in that sense. I think what happened to her body after her death of course was, or shall we say, is very gruesome to us coming from our more modern perspective and sensibility, but ultimately not so unusual in terms of the practice at the time. I mean her body parts were exhibited next to the brains of Voltaire and Molière and everyone else. So they did not seem to have the same regard for people's physical remains and of course in that sense also disregarded what was and still is a very strong African belief that the remains are something precious and sacred that should be treated with dignity. But I suppose there was no way the French at that time could really know much detail about her culture.

A.O. Number 4. The idea of stairs, upward and downward movements feature quite strongly in the music of *Saartjie*. Why specifically did you employ this 'figure' – both in your music and your libretto?

H.H. Well ultimately I suppose I haven't really consciously thought of stairs as a symbol – for me the stairs that you mention at the opening are merely a way of kind of placing her in a specific kind of 'attic environment'. And the upward surge that one hears at the beginning of the opera was for me more closely associated with the idea of agitation, anger, frustration, and such things. And I suppose one could also associate that with yearning and ascending and striving and that same motif right at the end of the opera is then transformed into something I suppose in like an achievement or redemption or a triumph or whatever you would like to call it when she finally manages to leave this world behind and return to the world she longs to be – these are my views. We have no way of knowing whether Saartjie [Baartman] actually really yearned to come back to Africa to the ancestors – there's no communication from her on that or from anyone else. And of course the one time she was asked if when wanted to come back to South Africa she said no in the British courts [King's Bench Transcription].

A.O. Number 5. Fireworks, stars, or burning are quite prominent features in your opera [libretto]. How did you portray these elements musically?

H.H. Well, for me the idea of fire as in the first moment she says [sings] “I feel I am on fire” is often associated with a particular instrumental colour, different types of chords. Frequently things like the octatonic scale or muted brass instruments that have a kind of snarling or biting quality or sometimes strings played *sul ponticello* all kinds of effects that have a very long tradition I suppose of being associated with, if you like, ‘inflamed states’. The moment later when she sees the fireworks and believe that she sees the stars of Africa give us a more glittering type of sonority and again scales and instrumental colours that are for me associated with the idea of sparkling and glittering and star-like.

A.O. Number 6. The French choir sing ditties invented by you – did you perhaps consider or research ditties, songs, and broadsheets that were found in England that referred to Saartjie [Baartman]?

H.H. I did find a couple of those, I couldn’t find any of the French ones which were apparently which almost equally numerous, I didn’t manage to trace any of those, but I suppose if I had gone to Paris myself or taken a considerably great amount of trouble I would be able to locate one. But I thought to invent something that conveys more or less the spirit of what such songs might have dealt with was sufficient and many of the English songs do refer to her physical attributes and that is also why I tried to incorporate that in a slightly salaciousness and undignified way. The French song would be something against she could react. Again, for me the whole question of how Saartjie [Baartman] reacts is a highly ambiguous one – the fact that she had already exhibited her body in Cape Town before she went to Europe and she did so of her own volition as a way of earning extra money says to me that she did not necessarily have any hang-ups or inhibitions that people kind of attribute to her and that she might have been you know, quite at home with that kind of salacious interest. In the opera I try to in a way bring that out but also say that maybe someone who is at the end of their life after a career in steep decline was very sick and an alcoholic would probably at a moment like that – she had been drinking a bit too much – feel rather sorry for herself and part of that soreness might be a regret for the choices she had made in her life and the way that people were treating her and that was not to say that she had always been, or had felt like a kind of victim of being treated, if you like, a kind of sex object. But yes, at this particular moment maybe other thoughts would have prevailed and it’s completely of course a scene of my own invention and probably never occurred anything like that form. But that’s what I suppose is what opera about – not really trying to represent history but really taking certain historical facts as a point of departure as a portrayal of human emotion through the voice.

A.O. The next one is a bit of a long one – your opera portrays some strong emotions from time to time as for instance when Saartjie [Baartman] reminisces about her life in Cape Town, or when she refers to stripping for those frigid men of science. Could you please elaborate how specifically you portrayed emotions through the music?

H.H. For me the reason why I love opera the voice is the most expressive of instruments available to us and I think that for me, is the essence of what opera is about. I admire Wagner greatly; I’ve never really liked the idea that opera is a kind of symphonic work with voices superimposed. Opera is about the voice, how

you can use the voice to portray human emotion. Now in the moment when she is nostalgic about South Africa and in a way reverts to or reinvents for herself the intense emotions of love she might have felt. I tried to make the music provocative of that kind of tender and exalted state. In music very often for me entails for a soprano using high notes and singing quite softly – what the Italians call *fillato* and which composers like Donizetti were avid experts [13:17 inaudible] using. That kind of singing was quite a revelation for me when I went to Italy and lived there. For me it was a great pity that so much of 20th century opera does not exploit the voice in that sense at all and in fact seem to rather look down on anything that they would regard as vocal virtuosity. But when you hear a great singer of Italian repertoire doing the Donizetti roles like Queen Elizabeth in Roberto De Veree [?] for example. There is especially a Turkish, or Armenian actually, Leila Gencer [Gencer is in fact indeed Turkish] who does these wonderful high notes that seem to me the very essence of human emotion in the most concentrated and most intensely internalised form. And yes I try to use something of that nature for these moments of great kind of personal intensity. Whereas in the moment when she [Saartjie Baartman in *Saartjie*] describes the men of science and the kind of grotesque way she was regarded and looked at by them and the French public. I try to use the kind of full gamut of the voice and everything it can do – especially when goes into “for you I am no more than this” – the sort of dark beast from exotic Africa – the orchestration is deliberately grotesque and excessive and so combinations of instruments and extreme registers and strange phantasmagorical colours and so forth. The voice also uses its lowest notes and chested notes of the female voice to portray this kind of almost savage way in which the world views her. So I tried in the opera as a whole I would say to use everything that the operatic soprano can do and to provide moments in the libretto where I could then write music that would show all the different facets of the soprano as a kind of vocal actor. I think that is what makes especially Italian opera for me so impressive and I think that Puccini is the greatest master of that integration of the dramatic moment, the musical idea, and the ‘vocality’ suited to that dramatic moment and that musical idea. For me Puccini’s operas are the summit in terms of music theatre at its best. Other composers may have written greater music at times but no one achieved that complete amalgamation of all the things that make a theatrical moment work in an opera. So, yes in a way I suppose he is one of my great models and one of the people I strive to emulate, though I would say that my style is quite different from his.

A.O. You quote the first and fourth verses of *Al lê die berge nog so blou* – why did you include this song specifically?

H.H. Simply because it is one of my favourite Afrikaans folksongs and there was a sentence in one of the sources I looked at and I could never trace it afterwards and it said that somebody reported going to the Eastern Cape and having heard the indigenous peoples on the farm singing among other things a rather plaintive Afrikaans folk song, or a Kitchen Dutch folksong as they would have called it. No I have no idea when *Al lê die berge nog so blou* was first sung, but there is nothing in the music itself that it could not have been sung in the first half of the 19th century. And I thought, why not? Again, it’s a type of operatic

liberty that one takes. But it is for me it is emblematic of the kind of melancholic strain that one finds in some Afrikaans folksongs and I thought it's particularly appropriate for her [Saartjie Baartman] condition of nostalgia and longing for a love that was lost and that was the main reason I suppose.

A.O. It makes sense. This brings me to my next question. Your treatment of this particular song is quite unique – you have a vibraphone playing lush augmented chords and when she sings about the morning star the strings end with and almost ethereal accompaniment [to Saartjie's singing]. Could you please explain and elaborate on this?

H.H. Yes, the idea was... Well it comes from quite a while back. One of the things I was quite cross about was that we were not allowed to use the harp. Now the harp is a standard in any operatic orchestra and yes, I had not been consulted about the composition of the orchestra – it was kind of imposed on us and when I asked them whether there was any leeway for changing instruments they simply said no. Not negotiable. The orchestra for example included an electronic keyboard which I had no intention of using and I said can't I replace the electronic keyboard with a harp, and they said no. So I didn't use the electronic keyboard and I didn't get to use the harp. *Al lê die berge nog so blou* is supposed to be in a moment in the opera when Saartjie sings and accompanying herself on the *ramkie* the producers saw fit to have her hold the *ramkie* but not when she is singing the actual song, and that kind of befuddled that issue. But yes, the use of the vibraphone and the pizzicati and even the hummed chorus was supposed to be a kind of operatic reinterpretation of what a strummed instrument might have sounded like as an accompaniment to a voice in that particular moment. The chords that are used, there is of course a counter-melody that comes against *Al lê die berge nog so blou*, which is also heard in the overture, in that sort of 'glittery' section and the chords employed in that glittery section tend to be chords associated with the hexatonic scale – which is a kind of scale I am very fond of using in certain moments usually associated with things magical, glittery, and so forth. So all that also comes into play and of course relates to the end of the song when she talks about the morning star. And the ethereal colours if you like kind of dictated by that, but it's also an opportunity for the kind of vocality which one associates traditionally with opera where at the end of a song or an aria where one usually has a high note, which in this case the high note justified is justified by context of what she sang. And just to return to that argument of operatic vocality, I think a wonderful thing about a composer like Donizetti is that he never uses these extremely tricky vocal devices merely as show pieces but always finds a justification in the text and in the emotional moment for them and truly great singers realise that and then use them also to convey that kind of heightened emotion we associate with opera rather than merely saying 'gosh, look how good I can sing top "C" at pianissimo.' Okay, so yes it is always that juggling of a great technique which is employed in the Lisztian sense of transcendental technique where the technique has to be so good that is no longer a pre-occupation but becomes a vehicle for heightened musical expression.

A.O. Yes, you have spoken about the humming chorus, is this once more one of your throwbacks to Puccini?

H.H. Not specifically, no. I meant the chorus to sound very, very softly for various, I think mainly logistical reasons, the chorus ended up being placed in the orchestra pit, rather than backstage as I had envisioned them. So they were far more present in sound than they should have been, and I kept on saying to the conductor 'Please, softer, softer, softer. They must not be distinguishable as a separate sound – they must in fact be a prolongation of the pizzicati sounds in the orchestra. But yes, that never happened they were just too close to the audience in a sense to really convey that effect.

A.O. Do mountains and valleys hold specific or special symbolic meaning within the opera for you.

H.H. Not really, not in a kind of a Freudian sense if you like, simply kind of as a fairly vague memory of her childhood which she associates with the natural beauty of the Eastern Cape, therefore with the idea of the Gamtoos Vallei and so forth. There's nothing more specific about it.

A.O. The next one I will have to break up in three bits. The libretto alludes to the writings of Georges Cuvier and Saint Hillaire, not only about Saartjie but also to African in general. Did their writings: (a) play a role in the writing of the opera, (b) the composition of the music, and (c) visual representation within the opera? Let's start with number a, did Cuvier and Saint Hillaire's works play a role in your composition of the opera's libretto?

H.H. Not much at all, and I must admit to be completely unfamiliar with almost all of the kind of, shall we say, contextualising type of literary criticism of the past thirty years or so. Where I have heard about it, it has always been in articles written by somebody else and I haven't read any of the great text books on the subject. And in a sense, yes I feel a certain sense of detachment from ... well let's put it this way ... it's perhaps not going to come over very well. There's self-consciousness about art that is created by people who are too well read in literary theory. The artwork becomes an explication of what they have read up. And for me art will, I think, always illustrate such theories and it is not as if art can detach itself from them, but I don't think that art should not necessarily be an embodiment of such theories. I remember old Diaghilev saying something about Ravel's *La Valse*, and I love *La Valse* and I love Ravel but Diaghilev said something that unfortunately has a grain of truth in it: when he first heard *La Valse* for the first time, 'I want art – not art about art'. And there is something about *La Valse* that is 'art about art'. A composer almost choose self-consciously aware the art form/genre that he is re-creating. So it is re-creation rather than creation – which is not to say that artworks and music don't often include moments of re-creation and I think *Saartjie* is a very good example of quite a lot of re-creation of different musical worlds and a juxtaposition of those worlds. And I can't say that I was unaware of the, if you like, the postmodernist implications of such a, if you like, a collage almost of different worlds. In a sense I thought the important thing for me as a composer and librettist is to justify it in operatic terms. Not to justify it in literary theory terms, and I wanted to show that for me Saartjie [Bartman] is this fascinating amalgam of virtually everything that makes a South African a South African. There was the influence of Black cultures, there was the influence of her own Khoi culture, there was the influence of Afrikaans, there was English, there

was ultimately even French. All of these things somehow contribute to making Saartjie, Saartjie. And for me she was definitely not this naïve girl from the bush, which is usually how she is portrayed in a kind of a politically correct case as victim. I think she knew pretty well what she was about and yes, her fame and success was largely to be attributed to her own initiative. The fact that she owned the copyright on her posters for example, I think is a perfectly [inaudible] act. If she really was this naïve girl who was simply being taken for a ride, how the hell did she get the copyright on her posters? We've wandered a little bit from your topic, but okay. I think that is the issue for me is that I find her very complex, if you like, a multi-cultural figure and my music therefore tries to in a way to also, to be or at least allude to and evoke that kind of multi-cultural complexity, rather than to be monolithic and in straightforward operatic or classical style.

A.O. Alright so, with this in mind, you did not explicitly allude to Cuvier...

H.H. No...

A.O. who actually dissected her body – although the allusions are there...

H.H. Yes, look I read up – I mean I read all the famous excerpts

A.O. yes?

H.H. that are quoted in relation to Saartjie [Baartman]. I wanted again to keep it at the level of her own comprehension of it. In other words she would not have seen those writings...

A.O. no...

H.H. so I didn't want to make that allusion explicit. I think in that scene where she talks about having been exhibited and examined there is a sense that it was for her an unpleasant experience and undignified one and I think that is about as far as one can take it in terms of her reaction. There's one preposterous book about her, I think it is called *The Hottentot Venus* by an American woman...

A.O. Crais and Scully?

H.H. Oh no, those are two Canadians – the preceding one which was also a big book...

A.O. Holmes?

H.H. Holmes, yes. Is it Roberta Holmes? Which has a whole ghastly little episode at the end where the scientist kind of gloats over her body and kind of arouses himself sexually at the thought and all kinds of... Which I thought is pure kind of trashy novelette style – which this woman is quite happy to descend to in order to, you know, gain a kind of spurious sympathy for Saartjie... and it is based on absolutely no historical evidence whatsoever. But yes, this Miss Holmes decided that there must have been some kind of

salacious interest on his side and that he couldn't wait to get into her private parts and all the rest of it. I mean I find that kind of thing masquerading as scholarship the worst possible thing to emulate and incorporate in one's work and I decided therefore to keep any hint of that kind of thing out of the opera. Its just... there's a good English word for it but I cannot remember it... portentous as far as I am concerned. And certainly the later book by the other two researchers never implies anything of the kind...

A.O. No it doesn't...

H.H. It's much more contentiously researched. They also try and get in their, you know, little moments of political correctness, like the name Saartjie Baartman must mean 'little savage servant girl' because someone who has the surname 'Baartman' must mean that he is a savage – which is of course complete and utter nonsense. And the name Sara from Biblical adjuration means well was the name of a servant and therefore Saartjie must be the name they gave because she was a servant. That again is scholarship; you can't even call it scholarship, almost like wishful thinking by way of wanting to make a politically correct point.

A.O. basically that wraps up all three sections of that question...

H.H. Right, right.

A.O. What was the desired effect of the Parisians singing *La Marseillaise* while it was actually banned in 1815 by Napoleon himself?

H.H. Yes, the reason why I wanted *La Marseillaise* sung by the cast was simply because of its explicit references to freedom from oppression and the fact that the French at that stage was still seeing themselves as great liberators, and you know the brotherhood of man and all that. And I wanted Saartjie in the state in which she was, as we have said inebriated and feverish to react to that and all that. So yes, that was incorporated purely for dramatic reasons and I was aware of the fact that it was banned at the time – in fact I think it was banned in the very year by Napoleon before that it was in fact possible to sing it. So yes, that is a little bit of artistic licence if I can put it that way.

A.O. Yes, that actually brings me to my next question. You have them sing *La Marseillaise* and Saartjie's lyrics are actually juxtaposed against this: "to arms, to arms indeed" to quote Saartjie and that sufficiently explains the next question I would have asked.

H.H. Well yes, it builds up to where she says: "and who is the oppressed?" In other words...

A.O. yes...

H.H. They are talking obviously about French people being oppressed by outsiders, here she is as an outsider and in that moment feeling herself as oppressed by Frenchmen. So yes, it's really just a kind of

ironic commentary by her on the singing of *La Marseillaise* and couldn't really achieve that with any other song...

A.O. no...

H.H. to the same effect. And also of course I think the general operatic audience knows that song and knows what it is about. That is associated with the French Revolution and the idea of the brotherhood of man and freedom, equality, liberty and all those things. So, it is the most potent musical symbol if you like of that specific thing and that's why I wanted to use it.

A.O. That makes sense...

H.H. and of course I even in a way said, okay the people singing it are themselves are probably inebriated being New Year's Eve and all that and might have sung it despite the fact that it was banned. Why not?

A.O. Of course. In this vein of question, why were they specifically clothed in French period dress?

H.H. Look, all those choices were choices of the director [of the opera]

A.O. So it's not your doing?

H.H. No. I had absolutely no say in how the work was presented.

A.O. How would you have preferred it to be done then?

H.H. As I had envisioned it, the score states the voices heard throughout the opera other than Saartjie's are all off stage, are never present on stage and therefore in a sense could all be playing in her imagination. They weren't really... and obviously when it comes to the end of the opera and the ancestors... reality and the imaginary kind of become a bit confused. But in a sense I also envisaged the earlier interventions by the choir could have been things she was imagining in her fever and inebriated state. I wanted her to ultimately to be the only physical presence on stage. But that was not to be.

A.O. How do you feel about this production?

H.H. I think they got much of it right and I think in some senses some of the things the chorus did in the background enhanced what was happening. I still would like to see a production where it is really twenty minutes of Saartjie and nothing else, but I think that takes a certain kind of bravery to say okay, we are sure that this singer can hold the stage for twenty minutes. It's not the kind of bravery... The director in this case was not a person from a musical operatic background. And I have often seen stage directors who go into opera and that they mistrust the ability of music and the singer to hold the stage. We see increasingly also in other professional opera productions where as soon as a singer has to sing an aria we have what I call the 'riders' – kind of figures moving around on stage to create some kind of action while the aria is

being sung because somehow they feel a voice singing and emotion being conveyed is not enough. There needs to be some kind of visual and physical action going on as much as possible – something, which I disagree with completely.

A.O. Thank you...

H.H. to give you an instance: at one place I had to put my foot down in the directing of the production...

A.O. yes?

H.H. was that at the end of the opera when Saartjie falls down, collapses and is dead the Parisians walking around in the background was supposed to be continuing walking. Which of course for me is completely anti-dramatic and anti-operatic. This is the end of the opera. The music has stopped. She's lying on the ground, curtains are supposed to close and there's supposed to be applause and in the background these people are still walking. I don't know – conveying what? So I asked the director what is the idea behind this? "Oh to show that life goes on". Which I thought was a rather trite little point to make – we all know that the whole world didn't stop when Saartjie died. So, half of the point I would like to make is the final point that opera should make. So there is one place where I actually did say no, I will not allow this to go ahead.

A.O. Further in this theme of the production as such, I've watched all 5 of the operas, one that struck me was Martin Watt's *Tronkvoël* – they actually have a whole stage set out with everything. Your opera specifically refers to Saartjie being upstairs, although she is placed on stage in the middle of the stage in a cage. How did you feel about this?

H.H. Look...

A.O. Upstairs versus on stage in a cage?

H.H. I didn't mind that so much. I think it made it in a way far more challenging for the director, because he very little room to manoeuvre, and in a way he compensated by introducing the Parisians and so forth. I don't know how it worked; whether that was part of his original idea that poor Saartjie was limited in space because he needed all that space for his Parisians. But it did make it extremely taxing on the singer and I think the director to invent movement for the protagonist. I mean I counted, I think she went around the couch seven or eight times, now whether that was intentional or not. I thought at a point well maybe this idea of the little roundabout which she has on the side of the stage at one point are being imitated by Saartjie going around the couch because it seems that she is going around in the same direction all the time. But it does become to my mind rather tedious and anti-dramatic to reproduce one gesture so many times and for no apparent reason that I could see. So yes, I liked the idea of her being confined, which I think was a part of my conception as well, in this room and that the world is outside it. That's also what the music does – it

evokes worlds that are not on stage. The director then of course chose to put those worlds on stage, which is again, a slightly different conception and in a way, takes away or shall we say refuses to recognise music's ability to evoke worlds which are not visible, which are not present on stage. The Italian composer, Busoni, said that is one of the things opera does: you have the world on stage which is represented in the music and then very often the composer evokes that other world which is the world behind the stage or beyond the stage. And that is very much what I try to do in this opera and use that idea also to say well that world beyond the stage could well be really just in Saartjie's head and not necessarily in the real world. So yes it was for me slightly problematic. If they were going to put her in a cage, they could have made the cage a little bit bigger so that there was more room for her to manoeuvre, more things to do. The stage instructions in the libretto incorporate the idea of her... being a chair and a bed and a mirror, things with which she interacts in quite dramatic fashion at times. And all those things were kind of removed so there was very little for her to do except run around the couch.

A.O. Also your chrysanthemums were not there...

H.H. No, no... well look I am perfectly happy to compromise on certain issues, not necessarily on others.

A.O. What would these 'others' be?

H.H. Well, for me for example she's singing *Al lê die berge nog so blou* she should be playing the ramkie. I made the accompaniment deliberately simple so that a person could in fact strum the chords in time even an untrained... person not trained in playing instruments could kind of suggest the idea of accompanying themselves on stage. So for me there are certain things that need to happen at certain moments in the opera and that didn't necessarily happen. I think in the essentials though they did respect the intentions and where there was a very dramatic moment like when she casts off her cloak and say "I am no more than this" or she goes to the window when the fireworks explode the real thing happens. If there were any other moments where I thought this is in a way betraying the intentions of the opera I would probably have spoken out, but you are in the hands of your director. And directors generally don't hold composers in very high esteem; they see them as some mild irritant or major irritant at times. I remember the first thing the director said when I walked into rehearsals the first time: "Oh my God, here comes the composer!" So, that seems to be the kind of general attitude.

A.O. Right that actually covered three questions in one, thank you. In your overture you have a complex motif – a jump of a second to a sixth I think – this is actually from Bertha Spies' article...

H.H. Right...

A.O. Which I deduced these questions from and you've got quite complex vertical structures in your opera, although your opera deals with a simple lady from the Cape, as Bertha Spies states. What is the function of these complex motifs and structures in your work?

H.H. Well... Partly I think it is a... there... ja, how can I... For me literalness in art is the touch of. In other words... to say that a figure or a character is simple and therefore their representation in musical terms must be simple... um is a kind of... oversimplification which I tend to not adhere to. I... We'll take an instance, and again a wonderful opera – Verdi's *Aïda*... Now, eh, Aïda is a slave girl, but it does not mean that her music is simple or simplistic. It is in fact some of the most sophisticated music Verdi ever wrote and Verdi quite tellingly said when he was criticized for not incorporating... eh... authentic Egyptian elements in his music... um... who needs to go and... eh... find a snippet of authentic music when you have the imagination to invent your own world? Eh.., and that for me is... really what I tried to do. I don't try to create a musicological document when I write opera – I try to create effective musical theatre, and I will use whatever means I have at my disposal to do that and I think... the main... the crux of effective musical theatre form me is the conveying of emotion. Eh, and I think even a simple person can have incredibly complex emotions and perhaps sometimes more complex than educated people who learn to... kind of tame their emotions and categorise them in simpler terms.

A.O. Hmm...

H.H. I think the less educated you are the more you kind of live in a welter of... of sometimes unanalysed and 'understood' emotions... which can only be sensibly represented by musical complexity. Um... when she sings something like a folksong, the music does become very much simpler, but again even there, there is an overlay of her emotional reaction to what she is singing. Not simply the folksong in what would have been its natural form. I try to convey her emotional involvement with the song and her reaction to it... in my terms, which are the terms of which are myself as a composer in a fairly sophisticated... eh... musical medium which is that of Western classical music. So yes... eh... I've... I never felt compelled to be as, shall we say, 'musicologically' authentic as possible at any given moment, or to have necessarily complex music for complex characters and simple music for characters being perceived as being simple... um, in fact for me it's one of the example again I can use from Verdi is in *La Traviata* when Germont sings *Di Provenza il mar, il suol* [Hendrik sings the incipit], which I mean is one of Verdi's simplest musical inventions which has the same rhythmical pattern tam-pam-pam-pam-pam-pam-pam-pam-pam-pam [to the melody of *Di provenza il mar, il suol*] – seventeen times over without any variation. Now...

A.O. mhmm...

H.H. My question there is Verdi being literal and saying Germont is a simple country gentleman thus his music must be utterly simple? Or is he perhaps playing a far more sophisticated game which I think Germont is playing which is 'I am presenting myself as a simple country gentleman in order to convince Violetta to do her what I want her to do'. Um... and in fact throughout the second act Germont is really manipulating Violetta in a rather sophisticated way and very successfully...

A.O. yes...

H.H. using words sounding as if they come from the heart and are spoken with great sincerity and all that but it is very possible to see that as a kind of mask for somebody who is perhaps at least a wily peasant and not just a simple innocent man... and perhaps Verdi is doing that being, if you like, elaborately and deliberately simple to convey the fact that this man is not sincerely simple but is kind of putting on the act. Um... so yes even such a famous example I think there are layers that are possible beyond the obvious layer of saying a simple man with simple music. Um... and... yes I don't think... look... um... in a way I am contradicting myself... Obviously there are things one does as a composer... to convey... class differences and so forth of sophistication. But I return to my original point... that I don't regard Saartjie as simple. I think that by the time she got to Paris she had... you know... been living in Piccadilly, going for coach rides on a Sunday in the park, she met dukes and duchesses and the Royal Family... um and she was obviously not only an enterprising woman, even when she was in the Cape... um also one who was very quick witted. I don't think she would have remained this simple girl from the bush. I don't think she was that even before she moved to London when she was already in her thirties I mean she has been in the Cape for almost ten years by that stage. Um... and... um I think it is part of you know our mythology of the poor African victim who should stay this simple cowl-like creature from the bush. And I think that is extremely patronising and racist. Um, do we deny her the capacity for enterprise, for thought, for development, eh and I simply said no, I think this woman after those years in London and Paris she was quite a sophisticated person who has been exposed to a multitude of cultures, who spoke a number of languages and who pretty well knew what she was about. Um, she might also mythologise herself and um... I think in one of the books there is also the episode where she speaks to... a French journalist and kind of invents her own primitive mythology of... say you know um... I was taken from the forest and placed on a floating tree... um conveyed to Cape Town. Now I mean no one who has lived in Cape Town for almost ten years was going to call a ship a floating tree.

A.O. No...

H.H. she was, she was playing the primitive to the Parisian audiences. And just as the London audiences were the... um... slave emancipators. Again... one's never quite sure at what level people are truly simple or merely playing the simple. I can't believe that the people who were considered about emancipating the slaves, which I think is an extremely worthwhile thing, really went to Saartjie's show and said 'ah, here's this poor savage woman in a cage and look the man comes with a whip and forces her out of the cage and she is forced to sing and dance! It's appalling!' Without thinking this is a showgirl doing her stunt. Um, I mean the man wielding the whip was the real freed slave.

A.O. Yes, Hendrik César.

H.H. Exactly. Probably more than a victim than what Saartjie was in her life, and he was playing the colonial master and she was playing the savage beast being trained to come and sing and dance. Um... now I think the people immediately saw this as a way of furthering their cause and said 'go look everyone, this is what's

happening in... in countries where they have slaves. Eh... and um... whether they themselves believed it or whether they were simply using it as a publicity stunt I don't know. But... for me again it's a... an incredible... if they really do believe it, it's an incredibly insulting assumption to make about Saartjie as a... an entrepreneur and showgirl... saying she is obviously incapable of being an entrepreneur and a showgirl she can only be an animal in a cage and that is how they brought her here and that is the condition in which she will continue to be. Um... so for me all those assumptions are... paternalistic, Western assumptions about Saartjie's incapability of being a woman, and an entrepreneur, and a showgirl. What's fascinating for example is the contrast between the world's attitude towards Saartjie and the world's attitude to... um Josephine Baker who came hundred years later... was a sensation and still is regarded today as one of the big showgirls and most successful showgirls of all time. She did exactly what Saartjie did; in fact she did a lot more. She semi-nude in public, which Saartjie never did, and her biggest hit was 'Hot hot hottentot' which is obviously based on Saartjie's success and on her desire to emulate that success. Um, so why is it okay for Josephine Baker to be Josephine Baker and be a myth in terms of stardom, but Saartjie cannot be a star. Saartjie must be a victim.

A.O. Right, um... motifs...

H.H. uhuh...

A.O. in *Saartjie* specifically. We've dealt with the jagged motif. Which other ones did you employ? And to what extent did you employ them to portray Saartjie?

H.H. Yes, look... eh, I am quite a firm adherent of the Wagnerian idea of leitmotif and development of leitmotif and action of leitmotifs to convey... um... symbolic uh, and emotional meaning. I think the wonderful thing about Wagner's leitmotifs is that they never simply a kind of tag some people like to describe them. Um... they always seem to carry the greatest possible intensity of musical meaning and Wagner was a master at manipulating that meaning through changes of harmony or the orchestration or the melodic intervals and so forth, or the rhythm. Um, and they for me convey a meaning that is instantaneous and completely effective in its place. Eh... I think Wagner at some point refers to them as 'knots of musical emotion' and that is exactly the way I see them too. So for me that opening motif of *Saartjie*... eh... is initially a motif of irritation and eventually achieves some kind of fulfilment at the end of the opera. Um, there is also the motif also associated with her nostalgia which is the melody which comes as counter-motif to *Al lê die berge nog so blou* and which in the opera is heard first in the overture when *Al lê die berge nog so blou* is not heard yet. Um... there all kinds of other um... motifs or cells or elements, certain harmonies, certain chord progressions that for me are symbolical of certain things... um, the kind of repeated note motifs that evokes, if you like, almost a funeral march when she speaks of death and which comes again when there is a reference to death or when her own approaches...

A.O. Yes?

H.H. the various... citations or pseudo citations like the French song or the... the um... Khoi song which I had to invent from a bit of eh... Khoi text that have remained... eh... or had survived um... even *Al lê die berge nog so blou*. All of them are kind of integrated into the musical fabric as symbols of paths, if you like of Saartjie's personality, but also certain emotional states... those particular um... cultural influences would have caused in her and evoked in her and come to the fore in these last moments of her life.

A.O. Would you say that you leave these symbols to the audience members to interpret? Or do you have specific meanings for yourself which you try to convey by means of these motifs and symbols?

H.H. Oh no, no. I do have specific meanings... um and I hope that... yes they are very specific for me also I think open enough for different perspectives and different interpretations, but I do hope that they do convey something of eh... a feeling of sweetness and nostalgia on the one hand and irritation and frustration on the other. Um... in the motif where she sings and thinks back to the Gamtoos and so forth and all those things...

A.O. yes...

H.H. reappear at various moments always to evoke that... or recall or evoke a similar moment in her kind of emotional... eh... emotional evolution throughout the scene if you like.

A.O. With this in mind I refer to Barthes and his work *The death of the author* which means in literary terms the author basically takes a step back and the reader from his or her cultural/sociological background interpret texts in their own way which means there is a multitude of interpretations which leans towards Kristeva again...

H.H. mhmm...

A.O. would you, how can I put this permit this in inverted commas, permit the listener to interpret these motifs, well, according to their own knowledge?

H.H. Yes, of course. I mean anytime you publish a work or have it performed in public, you are allowing others to appreciate it and assess it and understand it as they choose to. I think... um... like most composers I am a bit of a control freak so and in a way like Wagner I do try to... to guide them at least at an emotional level in certain directions. I think that is what makes opera effective...

A.O. yes...

H.H. if you have a composer like Stravinsky for example who to my mind never wrote a successful opera. He detaches himself emotionally and say I want to be detached as a composer I want my audience to be detached I don't want anyone including the singers to feel any emotion as they perform this work; the result is that people don't feel any emotion. Then that for isn't opera. That is merely a kind of fossilised skeleton

of an opera. Um... for me, ja... opera is often love and blood and guts and all the rest... um, and I try to feel that as I write it and I hope that some of that feeling is conveyed in the music itself. And that at least a certain percentage of the audience will feel similar emotions when they listen to it. I doubt that the emotions will ever be identical but I see it as part of... my craft and of my level of skill if I have such... to be able to convey what I feel in musical terms fairly successfully. Um... and of course I think all of us can always become more skilful and more greater craftsman and therefore I don't that I'm perfect in being able to express my emotions or to convey them to others in musical terms as yet or probably ever will be but that is definitely what I strive for.

A.O. There are three instances that you make use of a scherzo-like waltz and these three instances actually deal with very serious issues. I'm quoting for instance: "another dreary evening of being gawked at, prodded, to prance like a monkey. A rare and fine specimen to play the savage on a London stage"

H.H. Hmm...

A.O. what was your purpose for the treatment of these actually serious events?

H.H. Um... the ja... the little waltz is basically I suppose inspired by the idea of a kind of fairground music eh... and Saartjie as a freak and entertainment and her own ironic um... stance... the fairground music is always slightly tweaked harmonically to make it a little bit um... more spikey – almost in a way that a composer like Prokofiev might have done. Whereas I am not quoting fairground music eh... and wanting to create a fairground moment. I'm... looking at the fairground perspective of Saartjie through Saartjie's eyes...

A.O. Aha...

H.H. if you know what I mean. It becomes three times removed. I'm looking at Saartjie, looking at the fairground looking at Saartjie. Um... so a fairly complex ironic perspective which is what I try to convey in the music and the music doesn't try to be... as readily accessible and attractive as normal fairground music which would... would be... it [inaudible] paints that attractiveness with spikey elements with things which show that the eh... person singing at that moment regards the whole issue with a certain measure of distaste if you like.

A.O. yes that's the way I actually interpreted these events. Yes, and she actually interprets them with distaste and almost sarcasm...

H.H. Indeed, indeed. That is exactly what I wanted to convey... you at least is one person who got that message as I wanted it to be.

A.O. Um... then that brings me to the inclusion of the Nguni lullaby, *Thula thu*, this was quite strikingly beautiful. As you have mentioned earlier, she's quite multi-cultural and multi-dimensional in inverted commas. Would you say this fits in with your multi-cultural theme...?

H.H. Sure. It is again based on... on eh... something I have read about her that in her London shows she performed in um... in Afrikaans and one of the indigenous languages um... of the Cape. Which I would have assumed to be something like Xhosa and which again um... we have no way of knowing if the song existed at the time but it is one of my absolute favourite South African folksongs and um... I've made eh... settings of it and variations on it for various instruments and also it was like... the obvious choice and it is for me also a very tender and emotional song and I thought in this moment which is in a way the 'tenderest' moment in the opera I wanted to use something like that.

A.O. Yes, your treatment is quite striking – it actually doesn't adhere completely to the original melody.

H.H. No.

A.O. She soars to beautiful high notes which is quite emotional

H.H. yes. Um... what happens... of course at the moment she starts departing melody the original tune is fact still present in the orchestra... in a way she embroiders around it in a way that um... one often hears when folk singers sing African melodies that the tune is kind of varied or is taken over by, if you like, the group and the soloist then do variations on it so ja... it's... it's um... obviously a rather classical take on that practice.

A.O. We've touched upon the Khoisan prayer already, would you please elaborate on how did you actually go about composing the music for this prayer? I did find the text in Theophilus Hahn...

H.H. Yes, exactly where I found it...

A.O. could you please elaborate on the compositional technique for this?

H.H. Um... again... very, very free as a kind of interpretation of... uh... and ja I'm... I'm... being very unscholarly and very vague... I um... once heard a performance eh... or a LP recording of um... Princess Magogo singing some of her bow songs and there was one... now I mean again it's hardly descriptive to say it starts fairly high and goes fairly low in each individual phrase because that is what a lot of um... Xhosa and Zulu music of course does um... but this song had a particular kind of plangent character and sounded... I don't know... it was very beautiful and very tragic and I have never been able to trace it again. And I basically used this... um, as a basis for the composition for the Khoisan prayer.

APPENDIX C: HENDRIK HOFMEYR INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW¹⁰⁷



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Date: 22 March 2014

Researcher: Andrew Nicolas Olsen
Student No: 23144130
Cell number: 076 858 3718

Title of study: **Saartjie by Hendrik Hofmeyr: constructing contexts**

I, Hendrik Hofmeyr, give my permission that Andrew Olsen may interview me and that my responses in the interview may be used for the purpose of research in the abovementioned Masters of Musicology study. I am fully aware of the nature of the research. I may withdraw at any time and my participation in this research is voluntary.

Hendrik Hofmeyr..... (Name of participant)

Andrew Olsen..... (Name of student)

Potchefstroom..... (Place)

¹⁰⁷ This interview was conducted during the initial stage of research and as such the title of my dissertation was not finalised yet.

APPENDIX D: EMAIL QUESTIONNAIRE BETWEEN ANDREW OLSEN (A.O) AND FIONA ZERBST (F.Z.), 22 SEPTEMBER 2016

A.O. The libretto states that the scenario is a collaboration between yourself and Hendrik Hofmeyr. Could you please expand on this and explain your involvement in the libretto?

F.Z. Hendrik Hofmeyr and I collaborated on a project sponsored by the Goethe Institute – he set some of my poems and the outcome was the song cycle ‘Of Darkness and the Heart’. The collaboration was an extremely happy one, so when Hendrik proposed a monodrama on Sara Baartman, he asked me if I would like to assist with the libretto.

A.O. You chose a very specific time in Sara Baartman’s life, namely the night of her death. Why did you opt for this particular epoch in Sara Baartman’s life?

F.Z. We felt the dramatic potential was enormous. We also felt that this would be heightened if Saartjie were to reminisce about her childhood in the Eastern Cape and lament having left home for a life of broken promises, disillusionment and despair. We wanted to focus on the tragedy of Saartjie’s dying at such a young age, amidst the carefree gaiety of Paris, as it would be enormously powerful, artistically speaking.

A.O. What about the story of Saartjie Baartman attracted you to write a libretto and scenario about such a simple, though historically important lady?

F.Z. Saartjie is a much-represented (and misrepresented) figure in South African history and, dare one say, mythology. As a multi-dimensional figure – woman, victim, slave, oddity, icon, heroine, sexual and political symbol – she makes an evocative subject for opera. I believed that Hendrik would do justice to Saartjie’s undeniably painful story and making a small contribution was really exciting for me.

A.O. The idea of stairs, upward and downward movements feature quite strongly in the music of *Saartjie*. Why specifically did you employ this ‘figure’ in the libretto?

F.Z. Saartjie’s fate was a tragic one and any short-lived triumphs she may have experienced were always tempered with setbacks and painful disillusionment. The emotions she experienced were best portrayed in this way – misused, attempting to recover some of her agency, etc. and going through these ‘ups and downs’ many times. In addition, we departed from convention by focusing on Saartjie’s longing to return home – which the audience knows will take place a whole century later, when her body is finally brought back to South Africa for burial here. This adds an extra dimension to the drama and gives a sense of Saartjie’s being pushed and pulled, back and forth, through time and history.

A.O. Fireworks, stars, or burning are quite prominent features in the libretto. Could you please explain the use of these figures and the implication they carry in the libretto?

F.Z. As I recall, we wanted to juxtapose the painful loneliness Saartjie experienced with the carefree gaiety of a celebratory Paris – this would show her despair in a particularly stark manner.

A.O. The French choir sing ditties invented by yourself and Hendrik – did you perhaps consider or research ditties, songs, and broadsheets that were found in England that referred to Saartjie [Baartman]?

F.Z. I don't recall having researched these myself, though Hendrik may have done so!

A.O. The opera portrays some strong emotions from time to time as for instance when Saartjie reminisces about her life in Cape Town, or when she refers to stripping for those frigid men of science. Could you please elaborate why specifically you portrayed these emotions in the libretto?

F.Z. I seem to recall that we discussed the fact that Saartjie was so wholly objectified that we wanted her voice and her feelings to emerge really strongly – her memories, her girlhood, the freedom she experienced before going overseas. As her humanity was called into question, we wanted to provide some kind of corrective.

A.O. The libretto quotes the first and fourth verses of *Al lê die berge nog so blou* – why did you include this song specifically?

F.Z. As far as I can recall, we wanted to heighten a sense of her nostalgia for home, a very important facet of the monodrama (the moving back and forth in time and highlighting the realities of two distinct places, France and South Africa).

A.O. Do mountains and valleys hold specific or special symbolic meaning within the libretto for you?

F.Z. I think, again, they allude to Saartjie's experiences – her hopes for wealth when travelling to England, then having her hopes dashed. In addition, her nostalgia for familiar landscapes would be strong indeed.

A.O. The libretto alludes to the writings of Georges Cuvier and Saint Hillaire, not only about Saartjie but also to Africans in general. Did their writings: (a) play a role in the writing of the libretto, and (b) visual representation within the opera?

F.Z. I recall that we did do some research, but I honestly cannot recall specifics – yes, their writings did play a role in that their representations were top of mind when we were writing!

A.O. What was the desired effect of the Parisians singing *La Marseillaise* while it was actually banned in 1815 by Napoleon himself?

F.Z. The theme of liberty would be really ironic, since Saartjie had long since lost hers. Parisians would be celebrating liberation from “the old slavery” – yet Saartjie was a slave to her destiny. We felt this would have made for a powerfully dramatic moment.

A.O. Would you say that you leave the symbolism to the audience members to interpret?

F.Z. I think so – I hope so! We eschewed complexity in favour of fairly simple, powerful images that would tell the story of Saartjie’s inner life, something that is frequently brushed over as she is now something of an iconic historical figure.

APPENDIX E: FIONA ZERBST INFORMED CONSENT FOR EMAIL QUESTIONNAIRE



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Date: 22 September 2016

Researcher: Andrew Nicolas Olsen

Student No: 23144130

Cell number: 076 858 3718

Title of study: *Saartjie* by Hendrik Hofmeyr: sign systems and context

I, FIONA ZERBST....., give my permission that Andrew Olsen may send me a questionnaire and that my responses in the email questionnaire may be used for the purpose of research in the abovementioned Master of Musicology study. I am fully aware of the nature of the research. I may withdraw at any time and my participation in this research is voluntary.

FIONA ZERBST..... (Name of participant)

ANDREW OLSEN..... (Name of student)

PRETORIA..... (Place)

APPENDIX F: COMPOSER'S ASSENT FOR REPRODUCTIONS OF THE SCORE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



South African College of Music

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8 September 2016

To whom it may concern

PERMISSION FOR REPRODUCTION OF SCORE

I herewith grant permission to Andrew Olsen to incorporate reproductions of any parts of the score of my opera *Saartjie* in his Masters dissertation on the subject.

Yours truly

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