

scholarship, but rather that of stimulating an interest in the Anglo-Boer War. With just the right amount of research to give it credibility, Schoeman has succeeded in producing a work that has one foot in leisure and the other in scholarship, and that is easily accessible to the layperson.

From Diaspora to Diorama. The Old Slave Lodge in Cape Town

(Cape Town: NagsPro Multimedia, 2013, 40 pp. CD-ROM. ISBN: 978-0-620-55581-4 (booklet) ISBN 978-0-620-55582-1 (CD-ROM))

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This is an unconventional work to review. It consists of an introductory booklet and a CD containing “a new completely revised *Diaspora*, several books, two revised theses, video snippets and a revised *Bibliographies of Bondage*. 9,000+ pages and 200+ illustrations”. The introductory booklet frames the intellectual parameters of the work and there is an introduction to the use of the CD.

As the title indicates, the Cape Slave Lodge at the top of Adderley Street provides the structure through which to enter the lives of Cape slaves. In his introduction Anthony Holiday explains the objectives behind the work. Noting that the building was transformed from slave lodge to judicial court, he observes that “The symbolism of the Slave Lodge did not strike them [the court officials], because the evils of slavery, servility, sexual abuse and madness had so poisoned their being as to quite literally blind them to the meaning of symbols of that kind”. Slaves, he suggests are negated as people and the Lodge, too, cannot “symbolise the condition of slavery” until its inhabitants are seen in a different light.

This is what the “E-book”, as Shell defines it, sets out to do. It aims to remove slave history from the academic world in which the subjects of history “do not recognise themselves”. The people, thus, are cheated of their own past and of their identity. The CD, on the other hand, provides ordinary people with

the tools to explore their own past without being oppressed by the “master narratives” of elitist professional historians.

It is not entirely clear that Shell achieves this objective. He has been meticulous in recording every researcher who has contributed to the work, and the many sources that have been used. In that sense the E-book is thoroughly reputable academically. The fact that it includes two theses and a substantial amount of other formal academic writing means that the presence of elitist professional historians is certainly present.

Having said this, the CD (in fact a pdf file with a downloadable Adobe Reader) is a wonderfully rich work to explore. The navigation is clearly explained both in the booklet and on the CD so that it is easy to move backwards and forwards, to progress from page to page or to locate the variety of articles, graphs, illustrations and lists. Adobe provides a search facility should the menus prove inadequate although, given the scale of the work, it is a little slow. With the selection tool it appears to be possible to copy both text and graphics should a student wish to illustrate a project.

This E-book is enormously thorough. On the left is a menu providing alphabetical navigation and on the right the menu lists the variety of themes and subject. The scale is huge. There is a considerable amount of text. There are graphs, illustrations, maps and video clips. There are census lists, manumission lists, lists of ships, of baptisms, voyages and cargoes. Because of the paucity of illustrations of slavery at the Cape, Shell commissioned John English to provide illustrations based on archival sources. Peter Laponder’s model of the Slave Lodge has been used in a video to explore the geography of the Slave Lodge.

It is not easy to describe a work which is both visual and interactive. I felt some parts worked better than others. The graphs, for instance, are impressive, ranging from demography and mortality rates to the ration of horses to free adult males. The video clips, on the other hand, are rather slow and I should have preferred more explanatory voice over and less music. One suspects that young users might not be particularly attracted by organ solos. But that is carping. The reality is that a large portion of the records on Cape slavery, together with text to interpret them, are contained in this single CD. It is a quite remarkable resource.